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PREFATORY NOTE.

THE author of this volume has requested of me a Prefatory Note, which may be an introduction to the British public. To those who have already seen Mr. Cooper's "Science of Spiritual Life" such introduction will not be needful. But I willingly comply with the author's request, be-speaking consideration for a volume of merit from Australia.

The work seeks to rest an argument for Christianity upon ultimate principles of reason, and to develop the argument by detailed consideration of the adaptation of Christ's teaching to the moral and spiritual wants of men. The theme is of the first importance, and the treatment will repay study.

H. CALDERWOOD.

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH,
November 15, 1880.



PREFACE.

A HISTORY of Christian evidence, from the time of Justin Martyr to the present day, would be both interesting and profitable to the biblical student. And Christian evidences will be found to be successful in the accomplishment of the end sought to be gained by the production of such works, just as they exhibit in greater prominence the more striking aspects of the Saviour's character and work. This character, while really human, is so *uncarnal* in its peculiar aspects and true phases, so unlike, nay opposite, to that of any mere man, that it requires only to be clearly seen to lodge in the mind of the unprejudiced discerning the conviction of its Divine source and supernatural nature.

To exhibit this character and work to an adequate extent is no possible accomplishment of man's. The inability, however, to succeed in

such an endeavour should not awaken despair in the minds of those who would make the attempt, nor discourage them in their laudable endeavour to surpass those who have gone before them, for if the inspired Evangelists failed to place the unique majesty of that character in its *full* grandeur before the eye of man, others may not hope to surpass them.

The apprehensions of the finite, however clear and numerous, cannot rise to the comprehension of the Infinite. This fact may be the *underlying reason* why the Spirit of Inspiration has employed four instead of one Evangelist to supply the Church with a glimpse of the truth as it is in Jesus. A fourfold vision of the numerous phases of Immanuel's wondrous character may hint to the meek that there are more in Him than man can attain to a knowledge of in his present condition of life.

The true power and value of all Christian evidence must be in the measure in which it seizes and places before the eye of the inquirer the striking peculiarities and superhuman aspects of Christ's character and work. And the effect and value of such evidence on the mind of the inquirer will be in the measure of his clear discernment of the uncarnal character and supernatural work of Jesus Christ. The following

pages are devoted to a humble endeavour to guide the earnest inquirer in this direction.

The latter portion of the title page to the volume may to some appear presumptuous, but it is placed on it at the earnest request of a literary friend, whose judgment the author does not feel himself at liberty to disregard. The work first appeared in the form of an essay. It is now recast into books and chapters, entirely rewritten, and so altered as to form a new work. It is sent forth as a humble contribution to the cause of Christ, in the hope that He in His benign Providence may bless it to many.

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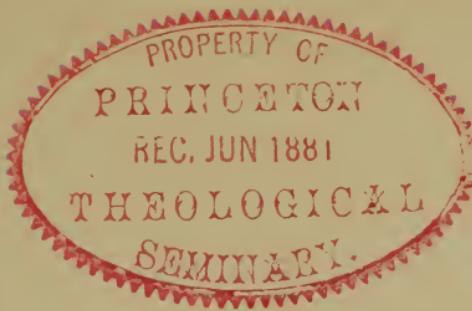
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INTRODUCTION.

ABSOLUTE Being without the power of conditioning Himself would render finite existence, or conditioned life, an impossibility. And finite existence without the power of self-creation necessitates the existence of the Absolute with the power of conditioning Himself. There is no other way of accounting for the existence of finite being. The power and mode of conditioning must be in the Absolute Himself, and thus lie far beyond the ken of mortals: the finite cannot penetrate into the mysteries of the Infinite. If it is to know them, it must learn them as they are disclosed to it by the Infinite. For man, then, to enter upon any inquiry regarding the origin or mode of the Absolute conditioning Himself, would be both irrational and absurd. Such an attempt on the part of man can only be a usurpation on his part of the prerogative of the Absolute, or a claim to the right of saying how

the Infinite is to disclose Himself, instead of, with a humble spirit of inquiry, endeavouring to acquaint himself with God through means of his learning the Divine, as God is pleased to disclose it in and to him. If God is pleased to condition Himself in and on behalf of man, it is man's interest and duty implicitly to accept whatever God gives him of the revelation of Himself. In the admitted existence of the Absolute with the power of conditioning Himself, we have the rational explanation of the existing order of finite being.

The evolution of finite existence from chaos to cosmos, or the conditioning of vitality from its simplest germinal form to the highest order of finite life through a complicated series of changing growth in the harmony of order and beauty, necessitates the superintendence of Intelligence or the guidance of Mind. This superintending intellect or guiding Mind is the centre principle of the Absolute, or Personality of God.

We have a clear and distinct knowledge of the existence of force ; and in the known operations of force we are aware of the normal and the abnormal manifestations of power. The evidence of such manifestation is apparent in the geological structure of the globe, in the vital experience of the different forms of animal existence on earth,

in the movements of Mind, and especially in the realisations of spiritual life. All *normal* operations of law in the material, physical, social, rational, and spiritual powers are co-operative with or subordinate to the Absolute in the conditionings of Himself. But all *abnormal* operation of power in these is departure from and opposition to the Absolute, and are manifested in the conflicts of nature and realised in the sufferings of life. How are we to account for the abnormal operations of power alongside the normal, or the diseased and healthy conditions of life, especially in man? The existence of such is an indisputable fact, which philosophy has not yet explained, and which urgently calls for a solution. The free agency of man is the only known condition of human life that directs in the way of a solution of this mystery.

The progress of life on earth through means of the conservation and co-relation of force, is not towards gigantic growth of animal existence in monster forms of body, but to mental superiority in the reign of spirit. The decrease of animalism from the ancient saurians, mastodons, and mammoths to the present forms of the animal kingdom on the one hand, and the progress of intelligence on the other; from the rude conceptions of the savage to the advanced thought of the philosopher;

proves that such is the tendency of the present condition of earthly existence. The same is manifest in the development of life from the zoophyte to man.

There is to a certain extent in the vital of animal existence, and in the rational movements of the human mind, the operations of a *curative* power ; but there are no indications of such a power in the spirit of man. Nor could there be. Enmity cannot of itself pass into love. Selfishness has not the power of converting itself into the self-sacrificing. This change in the consciousness of spiritual life is possible only through the exhibition of self-sacrifice on behalf of the selfish. This self-sacrifice is the only power known to man that can change the abnormal operations of power in spiritual life into the normal.

Sound vitality, correct thought, healthy life satisfy man ; but he cannot, as the permanent condition of existence or the continued experience of his life, reconcile himself to evil in any form or degree. Neither can man live at ease in darkness, rest contented with ignorance, error, or faint glimpses of light, nor can he satisfy himself with the cravings of his own heart—the inner longings of his spirit. And this is as it ought to be if humanity be the capacity of the Infinite—the receptivity of the conditionings of the Absolute.

Man, from the earliest times, has been a searcher after truth ; and in the devout speculations of his mind and the sincere longings of his spirit he has strenuously endeavoured through the knowing of truth to rise superior to the inner bondage of his soul, and the outer trammels of his life. The attainment of this realisation of life has been the one end he has ever kept in view, in all his searchings after wisdom and recommendations of himself to God. He has cherished the hope of a happier life in the secret strivings of his spirit, and the pious utterings of his heart, and especially in those efforts in which he has striven to lose himself in the Divine. And this effort of the Indian devotee may not have implied, as it is generally supposed to have done, a conception of the annihilation of his soul in his re-absorption of life into the universal essence, but rather an undeveloped conscious longing for a oneness of life with God. In the efforts of the ardent aspirations of India reflected in China, and reproduced in Egyptian, Persian, Grecian, and Alexandrian speculation, man has sought to realise his chief good. And it ought to be a matter of anxious inquiry with the thoughtful, why man, in all these earnest endeavours and persevering efforts, has never succeeded in easing himself of his burdens. And the answer is, he

has not succeeded because he has not sought his end by *implicit* learning, but by *guessing* about truth.

Judaism being the revelation of the will of the "I am that I am" regarding the national and religious condition of the Jews, and only the foreshadowing of "better things to come," did not provoke the opposition of Gentile philosophy. It was otherwise, however, with Christianity, which being the manifestation of the infinite depths of the Infinite Essence in a personal appearance of the essentially Divine, making atonement for the world in a stupendous deed of self-sacrifice. Such being the very reverse of the imaginary conceptions of men, necessarily aroused the speculative ire of the Jew and the Gentile, and brought down upon itself the opposition of philosophic genius in the strenuous efforts of the loftiest flights of irreverent imagination. The opposition of Gnosticism to Christianity seems to have been the most daring attempt of men to recast revealed truth in the mould of speculative thought. If Christianity had not been the profound conception of the Infinite Mind, it would not have aroused against it the severest antagonism of Gnosticism. The opposition of the Gnostic sects to Christianity displays the *latent* belief in man of his ability to lift himself out of

present evil, through means of his speculative efforts to raise himself into a lofty life, not by an earnest embrace and implicit compliance with the manifestations of the Divine, but by creating for himself such visions as will enable him to realise existence and life *as he* would have them to be.

This may be thought a severe charge on man's speculative efforts, but its aptness will be apparent when we take into account the ease with which man speculates, compared with the difficulties with which he *learns* the truths of his nature and fallen life. By our simple gazing upon and guessing about the objective and subjective, we cannot come to a knowledge of what is contained in them. We may gaze long upon the pure white light without discerning or even conceiving of the colours which by refraction are found to be contained in it. And so in a state of undisturbed communion with himself, man could not know the depths of his own spirit, or the possibilities of his life. In order to come to a correct knowledge of the external and the internal of being and life, there must be the patient scientific inquiry of Nature and the implicit belief of revealed truth; there must be in the inquiry of Nature the cautious formation of hypothesis to be tested by slow and careful reading of experience; and in the learning

of revealed truth there must be the ready yielding to the inner suggestions of the Spirit of God. But to such there are formidable difficulties—the obscurities of the external, and the prejudice of the internal. There is speculative idolatry in man, and this has underlain all his inquiries after truth, and kept him from coming to a correct discernment of the facts, principles, and laws of the outer world and of the inner spirit.

It would thus appear that the problem of time—the question between God and man—is this. Is humanity to reach its goal—realise its highest possibility as the tabernacle of the Divine—by means of its *unqualified* reception of the conditionings of the Absolute? or is man to have *a say* in determining what truth is or ought to be? Is he by his speculative fancy to qualify the manifestations of the Divine, or to have a power in determining what are to be his conditions of realising fellowship with God? This appears to be that which underlies and colours all man's searchings after God, which qualifies all his struggles after truth—which conditions all his endeavours to realise a satisfying life. The careful study of these facts will help to the satisfactory explanation of why man does not by speculation arrive at the knowledge of truth.

Speculative fancy blending itself with scientific

inquiry and philosophic investigation has greatly retarded the progress of human knowledge. And speculation blending its imaginary conceptions with the truths of revelation in the formation of Church dogma, in abstract conceptions of Divine perfections, has greatly tarnished the beauty of Christianity and retarded its power. However, in the present aspect of scientific investigation and philosophic inquiry, we seem to be entering upon a more correct and religious mode of investigating the teachings of nature and the truths of revelation, the result of which will be a clearer, more comprehensive and ennobling knowledge of God, as disclosed in His work of creation and manifestations of Himself in His Son.

Speculation going out in search of the one simple principle, and eager to ascertain how the Absolute and Unconditioned could give being to the related and conditioned, would easily conceive of the impossibility of such, and satisfy itself with denying to the First Cause every attribute which would make the Absolute the object of religious emotion. Instead of discerning a religious relation between the creature and the Creator, the personal finite and the Personal Infinite, such speculative thought would seek for the relation of cause and effect and be willing to

rest in a pure materialism. Evil would not be regarded as abnormal but as the mere phenomena of nature, the necessary result of imperfect life, or an inevitable quality of finite or conditioned existence. Speculative thinking would, without difficulty, come to the idea that all nature was governed by the same law of evolution and developed from the same source. In its view there would be no element in the one contrary to the other, all would be moving onward to the same goal; hence the descent of religious speculative inquiry to material philosophy.

This more or less seems to have been the characteristic of all ancient philosophic inquiry. And such a philosophy easily prepared the way for the Gnostic reaction against Christianity. The speculative mind of the Gnostic in these circumstances, instead of learning the wisdom of "casting down imaginations and every high thing which would exalt itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ," did the very reverse. It subordinated the doctrine of revelation to the guessings of speculative philosophic thinking, and strove to learn the character of God, not by *simple* belief of the manifestations He gave of Himself in His Son, but from the *dreams of fancied* thought rashly intermeddling with re-

vealed truth. The Gnostic imagined that by such he would impart a profounder and more lofty character to the doctrines of Jesus, but without perceiving it, he deprived Christianity of what was its grand and glorious characteristic, and reduced it to the rank of a new system of philosophic speculation. Thus, instead of learning from Jesus the true character of God he professed to be so eager to know, he entered upon a career which was fitted to uproot the very foundation of Christianity, and deprive it of its first and distinguishing principle by making it subordinate to his speculative fancies.

Whence this tendency of all mere human philosophising? Is such rational, dutiful, loyal to truth, beneficial to man, or filial to God? Is it not the outcome of the spirit of self-assertion, the very essence of selfishness, in direct opposition to the self-sacrifice of God by the self-will of man? Man can never attain to pure conceptions of truth by blending his imaginary notions with the clear disclosures of the Unseen, nor can he improve upon the mind of God by forcing his conceptions of what he thinks ought to be upon the manifestations God gives of Himself. He has not a more direct or Divine vision of being than the Conditioner of the Absolute, nor can he claim a more truthful conception of what is in

God than He who came forth from the Infinite Essence to reveal the mind and the will of the Father.

Is there not in all human methods of philosophising an indication of the unfilial heart and irreligious spirit of man? All the sciences, falsely so called, all the irreligiousness of religious inquiry are the speculations of imagination, and not the implicit learning of the filial spirit or devout reception of the loyal mind. All true science is the careful reading of Nature's teaching or the reverent reception of God's revealed truth. But this spirit of reception is the very thing which has been awanting in all the philosophic speculations of the leaders of thought in the different schools of human learning, from the first era of inquiry to the present times, and was that which especially characterised the Gnostics. The rationalising instead of the simple learning in Christianity, is a display of great folly. It is an askanting of the inner eye from the perception of the truth as it is in Jesus on the one hand, and the adulteration of the pure gospel on the other. It is no less the enfeebling of the power of Christianity, and thus a marring of the work of grace, by presenting to the view of the sinner another which is not another gospel. In all such, men do not perceive and cannot believe the

truth of the gospel, however clearly its evidence and grace is placed before them.

The only successful encounter with erroneous and imperfect life is in the spirit which moves the individual to say from the heart, "Not my will, but thine be done;" not my ends, but Thine—in Thy ways. This must be the utterance of every spirit of man in his struggles with the principalities and powers of darkness. And in all his endeavours to escape the trammels of evil, man must hold to this the only condition of correct knowledge. If there be in him the faintest preference of self-will to the implicit obedience of truth, then will there be a corresponding qualification in his reception of it—failure in his consciousness of perfect life, shortcoming in his enjoyment of the pure, enlarging, and satisfying bliss of knowing Jesus. There must be nothing of the spirit of self in the successful inquirer after truth. Pure realisation of Christianity, or the perfect life of man, is through the expulsion of the selfish in him by his inbreathing of the self-sacrificing of the Divine.

If the human be the capacity for the conditioning of the Absolute, man must be capable of the indwelling of God. And he realises this indwelling as his spirit becomes possessed of the Spirit of God, and in the possession of this Spirit

takes occasion from existing evil to rise into the fuller consciousness of a Divine nature and life. Love is the highest form of being, of life, and of realisation. The discernments of love are more profound and comprehensive than those of intellect. Where there is no love of God in the inquirer after truth, there can be only cold, pale, imperfect apprehension of mind.

Self-sacrifice is the highest form of love in a world of sin—the only power of triumph over evil—the condition of the most thorough and exalted life. And the crucifixion of self is the most difficult deed of fallen humanity, and the most Godlike doing of man. It is God's taking possession of fallen man. The most glorious and blessed condition of the human is man's becoming conscious of his being fully possessed by the Spirit of God. These teachings are the underlying principles of the gospel of the Son of God. And Christianity is the only religion on earth which has given such conceptions to man. The gospel raises the believer of it into the fellowship of the Divine life. Christianity proves itself to be the true revelation of the Divine and the adequate religion of man, by the transformation it effects in the life of the believer in Jesus. The Divine, in taking full possession of the human, affords to the indwelt the clearest

revelation of the conditionings of the Absolute. And the human, in its unqualified reception of the Divine, realises the fullest consciousness of being possessed by God.

Christ was no philosopher, but a faithful Prophet, claiming to be the infallible Teacher from God. He did not speculate, imagine, discover, or learn truth, any thing of what He declared concerning God or man, of what was needful for man, or of what God was doing for the race. He spoke in no misgiving or hesitating tone, but as One which had a right to speak. He ever spoke as One who saw clearly, correctly, and fully into all the facts, principles, laws, relations, powers, and results of being and life. And thus He spake "as one having authority, and not as the priests." He asserted that what He spoke the Father spoke in Him, what He did the Father did by Him—He did and spoke only as He saw with, and heard from, His Father. And thus He demanded of all men faith in Himself and in His declarations of truth.

Christ did not as a philosopher call the attention of His disciples to the study of nature, but as the Incarnate One to Himself, declaring Himself to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life; and required of each and all His disciples to do only as He commanded them, and to do

all that they did for His name's sake. And by His coming into the world and teaching as He taught, He has brought before the philosophic inquiry of man facts which demand a scientific examination and a philosophic explanation.

Christ has been compared to Socrates and other great men of antiquity, and there is ground for the comparison. But there is greater ground for contrast. And the contrast is a very striking one. Neither Socrates nor the other great men of antiquity claimed to be infallible teachers, but only mere philosophers. They professed to read Nature that they might discover her laws and acquire a knowledge of her principles. And all that they required of their disciples was a careful attention to, and thoughtful study of, what they taught. It was quite otherwise with Jesus; He spake from His consciousness of what He saw with His Father, and only of what He saw and realised in His fellowship with God. And He declared only what in His omniscient discernment He knew to be in God and was needed by man, and what, if only received in faith, would effect in the inner life of the believer its Divine work. All that He demanded of all men for the realisation of eternal life was faith in Him as the Revealer of God and Saviour of the world. In this He stood alone

and unapproached by all the great men of antiquity.

The ancient seekers after God had no discernment of what was wrong with man, nor of what was needed to make him right with God, with himself, and with his fellow-men. In all this Christ was far above the ancients. He knew both God and man, and spake only of what was wrong with man, and of what was necessary to make him right. The burden of His teaching was His Father's sending Him into the world, to secure by His death all that was necessary for the salvation of all men—to create the *power* of human deliverance, and make known the medicine of man's cure. And all that He requires of the burdened and heavy laden for their perfect deliverance from all evil is to come to Him in the assimilations of faith, and thus find rest unto their souls. And why the Church is not what she ought to be, and the world still needing to be brought out of the power of evil, is that men now, as in former times, blend their own speculations with what Christ has revealed of God and taught concerning man.

Men are unwilling *implicity* to believe in Jesus. What was the manifest vice of the Gnostics is still more or less apparent in all the corruptions of Christian truth — the blending

of the conceits of human imagination with the pure revelation of the Divine. This is the great hindrance to the simple faith of man in God.

The phenomena of the gospels, especially the synoptics, is that of a poor illiterate, unbefriended, despised Carpenter—claiming the highest rank, entertaining the loftest conceptions, making the greatest possible promises and displaying wondrous powers, yielding Himself up to the enmity of His foes, to be mocked, scorned, and crucified, that He might rise from the grave to reign in Divine majesty over a universal empire. His kingdom is to be an Ecclesiae which is to draw its members into it. They are to belong to it not by natural birth, nor by the conquest of the sword, but by faith in Him, love to God, and goodwill to all men. They are to be the best, wisest, and most godly of men, drawn from the ranks of the wicked, vile, and unworthy of earth. He is to win His kingdom not by arms, wealth, diplomacy, or the device of man, but by the emanations of truth proceeding from Himself. And He is to entrust the truth proceeding from Himself to twelve illiterate men, who are to establish His kingdom by publishing the truth, *and only the truth*, about Him as they travel from country to country.

This doubtless is a conception which, when

first announced by the apostles, might, with an affected air of wisdom, have been ridiculed and sneered at by the wisdom of this world. But after its triumph of nineteen centuries the power which it sways among the civilised nations of the earth, and the might with which it rules in the lives of men, where is the man of intelligent discernment and comprehensive wisdom that will now ridicule this conception of the Nazarene.

The fact of the existence of Christianity is patent to all, and cannot be gainsaid by any man. There is the Christian Church on earth ; there are the Christian scriptures ; there is the Christian ministry, the Christian sabbath, baptism, communion, life. These are indisputable facts which no sane man will call in question.

And these facts of Christianity are in themselves spiritual powers which work only for good, the highest good of fallen man, emancipating him from a fearful bondage. But the spiritual facts of Christianity are capable of being perverted into superstitious formalism, and as such they are an incubus holding down their dupes in awful degradation.

These facts of Christianity are spiritual powers which speak to the nature, the instincts, the aspirations, the guilt, the fears, and the hopes of man as no other power has ever spoken to him,

emancipating him from the slavery of sin, and raising him into the liberty of the Divine life, the enjoyment of peace with God.

And these facts of Christianity, as spiritual powers, exert the most beneficent influence. They calm the life of man. No power on earth is so beneficent as the spiritual power of Christianity. And this is as it ought to be. Christ taught benevolence, He exemplified benevolence, He enjoined and rewards benevolence among men. His religion, when spiritually known, is realised as a benevolent power and work.

And these facts of Christianity, as spiritual powers, are impressing themselves on the literature, the laws, the institutions, the customs, the deeds, and life of the world, as no other facts or spiritual forces have ever done. There is no power known to man that is exerting such a quickening influence among men as the spiritual power of Christianity.

And these facts of Christianity, as spiritual powers, are raising the life of mankind. They are enlightening the mind, softening the heart, elevating the life, deifying the character of civilisation, bringing men into communion with God.

And these facts of Christianity, as spiritual powers, are enduring facts which no power on earth can destroy or hinder in their spiritual

progress. The mightiest forces of earth have combined to overturn the spiritual power of Christianity, but they have only laboured in vain. Where are the powers which persecuted Christianity as she entered on her Godlike career. While they have all perished she is only increasing in her influence among men. Indeed, it is not saying too much to assert that Christianity is the only enduring thing among men. The national kingdoms of earth, as they undergo change, pass away. The fashions of the world are ever changing. Riches flee away. The very bodies of men decay and are no more. But spiritual Christianity continues, progresses, remains to bless innumerable multitudes. The spiritual attainments of the Christian shall continue for ever. Spiritual Christianity is the only enduring thing among men. While they and all that appertains to the life of man pass away, Christianity remains and will for ever endure.

BOOK FIRST.

CHRIST'S TEACHING SUPERHUMAN.

CHAPTER I.

THE WORLD'S MORAL CONDITION AT CHRIST'S APPEARANCE.

1. MAN FAILS AS A RELIGIOUS BEING.

MAN is essentially a religious being. Religion is the chief object of his life. But when left for many generations to himself, instead of rising to the highest moral and spiritual condition, he sunk into the most absolute degradation, lost the knowledge of God, became the dupe of superstition, the slave of every foul lust and passion ; and this, even while he was intellectually advancing.

II. A DELIVERER NEEDED.

The world, therefore, stood in need of a Deliverer. The race, in the prior ages, had been given ample time and opportunity to exert its highest genius in ascertaining if, by its own unaided exertions, it could elevate itself in the sphere of spiritual life. To this end the Gentile was gifted with fine endowments, and the Jew

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blessed with a revelation from God. Nations were raised to a lofty state of political power and refinement. Individuals, at different periods and in various communities, were endowed with noble natural qualities, and given positions of vast influence. Buddha in India, Confucius in China, Zoroaster in Persia, Daniel in Babylon, Pythagoras and Socrates in Greece ; these, with poets and moralists, philosophers and statesmen, put forth all their powers to reform the moral and spiritual condition of mankind. Civilisation and empire were extended to their furthest limits. Art, philosophy, and literature were raised to a degree of refinement that has never since been surpassed. Genius displayed extraordinary power. Ethical science was exhibited with the utmost elegance of literary taste. Poetry flowed from the imagination in its most exquisite strains. Sculpture shaped the marble into breathing life. Architecture left models for the guidance of after ages. The State was raised to the supreme condition of energy and influence. Every citizen, every incident of daily life, were only viewed in their relation to the State's well-being. But, amid all this high civilisation and intellectual refinement, there was only the more appalling moral degradation. Spiritual ignorance, religious error of

the grossest kind, everywhere prevailed. The national and social life was destitute of all that is pure, dignified, ennobling. Religious worship was utterly wanting in the spirit which brings man nearer to God.

III. THE FAILURE OF PHILOSOPHY.

Men of the loftiest genius and talents had earnestly and perseveringly devoted themselves to the search for truth, the character of God, the principles of human well-being, and the destinies of the race. But, instead of penetrating into the mysteries of the Divine Nature, discovering the relations of man to God, the causes of his spiritual conflict, and the remedy for his deep woes, they only the more effectually shut themselves out from Divine knowledge, and deepened the midnight darkness of superstition. At length, despairing of success, they gave up the search, declared that unless the gods themselves should be pleased to reveal the knowledge to mortals, man must for ever remain ignorant of God. Meanwhile the race sunk deeper and still deeper in monstrous superstitions. Absurd ceremonies, cruel and bloody rites, abominable orgies constituted the worship of the ignorant masses. The learned sought shelter in disbelief. Immorality in its most hateful forms prevailed

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universally. The ties of social life were held in contempt. The priests, in ridicule of the rites they were performing, laughed mockingly to one another from their altars of sacrifice.

IV. THE FAILURE OF THE JEW.

If such was the condition of the Gentile, that of the Jew was even worse. Gifted as he was with superior privileges, the guilt of his self-degradation was all the greater. He had been divinely separated from the other nations of the earth, favoured with heaven-born institutions and a Divine law. His mission was to exhibit to the Gentile the blessedness of the people whose God is the Lord. But the Jew had thrown off his allegiance to Jehovah, had forgotten the purpose for which he had been set apart, perverted to the ends of selfishness and sin his most sacred institutions, embittered his national life with sectarian feuds and a fixed hatred of the Gentile ; so that he surpassed even the heathen in wickedness and abominable idolatry.

Clearly, then, man, by the light of nature, aided by a partial Divine revelation, could not discover God, or the way to fellowship with Him. The judgments of Plato and of Moses are at one on this point. Perhaps the need of a final revelation was never more fully realised

than by the Jewish high priest himself, when, leaving the trembling multitude behind him, he approached the holy of holies, drew aside the veil, and stood breathless with awe in the presence of the mysterious Shekinah.

V. GOD HAD A PURPOSE IN PERMITTING
MUNDANE DISORDER.

Doubtless, it was to prove that man could not by his own efforts discover God, and so to prepare him for the final revelation, that God permitted all this mundane disorder to arise. The experience of ages, the failure of reason to discover God, might have proved the need of such a revelation. But man is reluctant to be convinced of his impotency ; clings to the false notion that he can compass all the conditions of his own moral well-being ; is unwilling to perceive that the finite cannot express the Infinite, cannot so much as conceive what of the Infinite is unrevealed, and that much less can a fallen being, contemplating God through the medium of guilt, conceive of His unmeasured mercy and grace.

VI. THE WORLD, IN ITS WISDOM, KNEW
NOT GOD.

The age in which Christ appeared, then, was not a rude and ignorant period of history, when

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men might be easily deceived by an artful pretender: it was an era of knowledge, of refined and enlightened thought, an age in which His sayings and doings could be scrutinised by acute and penetrating observers. The Greek philosopher possessed in his whole language the finest instrument of thought ever yet known to humanity. Aided by the speculations of other minds, as well as by gleams from the Divine revelation given to the Jew, he had risen on the wings of speculation into the highest regions of abstract thought. But the most eagle-eyed amongst the philosophers could not discern the nature of faith in God, the need of repentance, the moral evil of revenge, the divineness of universal brotherhood, the glory of self-denial, the blessedness of peace and rest in an overruling Providence. A teacher was needed who could disclose to man what philosophy had failed to discover, and was powerless even to conceive. "The world, by its philosophy, knew not God."

CHAPTER II.

CHRIST'S ADVENT.

I. CHRIST WAS CONSCIOUS OF HIS MISSION.

INTO a world in this condition Christ came. Conscious of the grandeur of His mission and the dignity of His person, He set about His destined work in all the humility of self-sustaining greatness. He came to men as their Teacher, not from the schools of philosophy or the seats of learning, not from the society of the powerful, the wealthy, and the wise, but from His humble workshop, leaving the carpenter's tools behind him, and wholly unallied with any sect, school of philosophy, or political party. He claimed to be the benefactor of all nations, the Friend of the race, its infallible Teacher in all that pertained to human well-being. He declared, as a revelation, *that* Truth which all who had preceded Him had vainly tried to discover. He spoke of God, of His relations to men, of the true principles of human well-being, of the Divine destiny of humanity, with an originality, a fulness, and a

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power which proved that His true home was *that boundless* realm of light. He had learned nothing from man. The light of truth shone in Him, as form pervades matter, as thought shines through mind.

II. HE PROCLAIMED A KINGDOM.

Addressing Himself to the weary and heavy-laden, He offered to all who should learn of Him the possession of present and everlasting bliss. From the commencement of His ministry He declared His intention of founding an universal and enduring kingdom which should one day embrace the entire human race; and this spiritual dominion was to arise by the simple exhibition of Himself. His Divine conceptions and promises spoke directly to the nature, the circumstances, the deepest instincts, the most urgent necessities of man. He spoke, moreover, in a manner that commands at once the assent of reason and the obedience of faith. The truths He revealed, while far beyond the reach of the loftiest speculation, were yet in perfect accordance with all the deepest principles of human nature.

III. HE GAVE MORAL FREEDOM.

The belief He required in no way impeded the free development of the mind; but, on the

contrary, emancipated the spirit, enlightened the understanding, purified the heart, and eased the conscience, satisfied every craving after perfect spiritual life. He demanded the suspension of no faculty, the repression of no passion or desire, the rooting out of no principle implanted by God. He did not enjoin a continual succession of rites, ceremonies, and sacrifices, or the abandonment of any legitimate calling or acquired position in society. He enforced no restraint on anything requisite for the true well-being of a single human soul. All He demanded of the believer in Him was co-operation with the Spirit of God in the work of his own present and eternal salvation. His teachings responded to the deepest yearnings of the soul. That God should be supremely loved ; that the thoughts of men should accord with truth ; that all life should be in harmony with the will of God : these are all essential conditions of human happiness. The glory and bliss of man consists in loving God supremely, knowing what is sternly true, doing what is immutably right. Wherever the doctrine of Christ is received, it quickens the life with those emotions of love and gratitude, and those convictions of truth, which enable the recipient to do all that God requires of him for his own safety and happiness.

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IV. HIS MISSION AND HIS POSITION WERE BOTH UNIQUE.

Such was the position that Christ assumed, the substance of His promises, and the character of the work He came to accomplish. How are we to account for all this, taking into consideration the failure of all reformers who had preceded Him ? The age in which Christ appeared was one of frightful immorality and superstition ; an age which felt its need of an entire renovation and the apprehension of a coming convulsion ; an age in which philanthropy confessed its own complete failure. Christ came forth from the very centre of moral wickedness and religious intolerance ; and yet He came pure as the light of heaven, spotless as innocence itself, so catholic in His views, so wide in the sympathies of His heart, as to embrace the whole human race in its warm affection. He came to rescue all men from their utter wretchedness by the voluntary sacrifice of Himself. He stood alone in this world of sin and suffering. Unaided, He set Himself to the task of freeing mankind from the burden of guilt. He enlightened the minds of men with heavenly truth and bound their hearts in blissful bonds to God and to one another. He stood alone and unaided in His initiation of the reign of love, of light, peace and brotherhood, of purity,

freedom, beneficence, and joy. He shed His own radiance into benighted minds, dispensed virtue from Himself into the withered frames of the maimed and the diseased. He voluntarily submitted to death, that a world of sin and wretchedness might live. To come forth from the abodes of pollution pure and spotless; to bear the hatred of prejudice, the wrongs of injustice; to stand unawed and unwavering amid the scoffings and revilings of the malevolent and ungrateful; to suffer patiently and uncomplainingly the insults of men and demons: all this He did in order that He might leave to the world a Divine example, create a transforming power to rescue the selfish race from its self-imposed bondage, elevate the degraded and the unworthy into oneness with Himself. Sublime conception! wondrous purpose! magnificent achievement! Amongst the heroes, philosophers, statesmen, moralists, priests of the whole world, where has such a purpose been ever dreamed of or achieved? It was indeed to win a kingdom, but not of this world. The design never could have originated with man. Its designer and achiever must have come forth from God.

CHAPTER III.

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

I. CHRIST CLAIMED TO BE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

CHRIST claimed to be the light of the world—the light that disclosed the heart and purpose of God towards men, and enabled man to see into his own heart, to understand his relations to the spiritual world, and to attain the end of his existence. He declared Himself to be the medium of the descent of the Divine life into the human soul, the way of man's ascent to God, the life that quickens and perfects the filial relationship of man to God. He declared that He was not alone the Divine life, but likewise the bread of the Divine life in man, the nourishment on which the renewed life of the soul feeds, is sustained, and perfected. He asserted that, in giving His body to be bruised and His blood to be shed by the hands of men, He gave to the world the only phase of Divine manifestation fitted to reveal God, and to inspire

man with love and confidence towards the heavenly Father. His death, He said, would be a manifestation of the Divine, presenting God to man—not as conceived of by dark and disordered human nature ; not taking vengeance for transgression ; but as God's stupendous sacrifice on man's behalf, as taking upon Himself all the consequences of human guilt, and all the responsibility of man's salvation : so securing for man that view of God in love, mercy, and grace upon which he could rest with the fullest confidence.

II. AND TO BE ONE WITH THE FATHER.

He claimed to be identified with the Father in nature and life ; so that whatever He did and said His Father did and said by Him. The Father, in giving His Son to die for the world, gave to man the final proof that all that God *could* give or do for man's salvation He was willing to give and do. He taught that His death was necessary to overcome the powers of darkness, and to procure the mission of the Spirit, whose work it is to quicken the soul of man with Divine life. He told His disciples that, by going away from them and returning to them again, He would show forth in Himself that revelation of the Spiritual and Divine which would raise them

into the rest of peaceful satisfaction with Himself and secure their deathless devotion to His cause.

III. AND TO BE SUFFICIENT FOR ALL HUMAN NEEDS.

He declared that He took upon Himself all the responsibilities of human well-being ; that all humanity needed in order to reach the highest conditions of life and blessedness was to come to Him and learn of Him. He invited all the guilt-burdened and weary to come for relief, assuring them that in doing this they would realise and enjoy life and immortality. He told the world that true glory is not won by the display of strength and prowess, but in sublime self-sacrifice ; that true happiness is not realised in gratification of sense, but in fellowship with the Divine ; that in order to realise this fellowship it is only necessary to realise the changed manifestation of God given to the world by Him.

IV. AND PROVED HIS CLAIMS.

This teaching, both as regards God, Christ Himself, the conditions of human well-being, and the nature of true worship, was *new, self-consistent, lucid, and perfectly rational*. It was *new* to the world. No previous teacher ever

spake as He did. His doctrine was novel and took men by surprise. It was directly opposed to the selfish instincts and principles of fallen man. This fact fully accounts for the opposition Christianity first met with, and still meets with. He put forward the loftiest claims for Himself, and yet He truly characterised Himself as the lowliest, meekest, gentlest of mankind. And His doctrine was *self-consistent*. It harmonised with the being and character of God, the nature of things, the facts of universal experience. It shed *light* on the deepest mysteries of man's existence—the Divine permission of evil, the ignorance of man, the facts of human life. It was *lucid* in its announcement, harmonious in itself, and filled the world with the light of truth. It was, moreover, *rational*. What it revealed of God agreed with the dictates of reason. What it asserted of man accorded with the facts of history and of daily experience. What it promised man it realised, and still realises, for all who believe in Him. The yearnings of man's spirit crave for God ; but a glimpse of immaculate holiness causes it to tremble, and it seeks to hide itself from God. The doctrine was *worthy of God*. If man be the straying child of God—the lost sheep wandering in the wilderness—it was worthy of the in-

finite benevolence and grace of the Divine Father to send His only and well-beloved Son to seek out His lost children. Finally, the doctrine was *adapted to the requirements of man's condition and to the aspirations of his soul.* It told him how he might cease to dread and learn to love God ; how the conscience could be eased of its burden of guilt ; how he could satisfy the inmost cravings of his spirit, and win rest from all his toils in the calm and satisfying repose of Divine love. What more could man desire or demand than the enthronement of God in his heart, the enlightening of his understanding in all truth, the opening of a well-spring of living water in his soul, securing for him the purest enjoyments for time and eternity ?

V. HIS DOCTRINE IS DIVINE LIGHT TO THE SOUL.

The doctrine was thus all that the world needed, all that the soul required. Instead of the vague and dim notions of God and of His character which men entertained, Christ revealed to them their living and gracious Father in heaven. False conceptions of their relations to God they had held, and of the obligations arising from these ; but Christ made plain to men that, while they are the children of God

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they are also sinners against Him, and that their transgressions of the Divine law have brought them into discordant relations with their heavenly Father. Men had cherished dim thoughts of a possible perfection of being and life ; but they had no right conception of how it was to be attained. They dreamt of immortality ; but they had no true idea of how it was to be won. Christ pointed out the way to perfection, "as the Father in heaven is perfect," and by His gospel brought life and immortality to light.

CHAPTER IV.

THE INFALLIBLE TEST.

I. CHRIST SUPPLIED AN INFALLIBLE TEST OF HIS TRUTH.

AN impostor would never supply his dupes with an infallible test to prove the truth or falsehood of his doctrine. A self-deceiver would scout any such proposal. An enthusiast would hold it to be superfluous. Only an enlightened and upright teacher, confident of the truth he teaches, would propose such a test. And this Jesus did. He appealed to individual experience, and in doing so supplied a test level to the capacity and suited to the condition of all men. The test is of all tests the most direct and satisfactory, and, in the matter of religion, is final. In the application of it to himself, each man has as clear and satisfactory a proof of the truth of Christianity as he has of any fact in nature or truth of science. The evidence in the one case is as direct as the evidence in the other.

Both alike appeal to experience. Until a man has subjected Christianity to the test of his own personal experience, he has no right to speak either for or against it.

II. THE TEST IS A PERSONAL ONE.

Disputes about matters of sense are determined by an appeal to the senses. He who refuses to be convinced by the testimony of his senses must be allowed to remain in scepticism. In vain does he argue that the senses are sometimes deceived ; for, admitting that this occurs, his former experience, not to speak of the testimony of others, will enable him to correct the false testimony.

Discussions regarding matters of intellect, again, are determined by an appeal to the understanding. It is true that the understanding, like the senses, may sometimes err ; but the error can be detected by clearer and fuller investigation, or by an appeal to the testimony of others. He who refuses to investigate for himself, or to be guided by the testimony of others, must be left in his scepticism. Doubts regarding matters of life are similarly decided by experience. A traveller who loses his way meets a fellow-traveller, and inquires of him the road ; if he reaches his destination by following

the direction given him, he will not doubt of its correctness, or of the capacity of his director. A person breaks a limb and applies to a surgeon, who sets it successfully. He will not doubt of the surgeon's ability, nor be persuaded that he is devoid of skill, nor that the limb is not restored. Or, if a person in illness takes a particular medicine, and is cured, and learns that many similarly affected had also taken the same medicine and been cured, he will not doubt of its efficacy, nor that he and the others have proved its efficacy.

In like manner, when a man who has striven vainly in many ways to find peace of conscience, finds it through belief of the truth in Christ, he knows *in himself* that Christ is a Teacher from God, and no scepticism of others will persuade him to the contrary. This is what Christ requires of every man.

The infallible test is, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." When asked the question, "What shall we do that we may work the work of God?" He answered, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."

III. IT ACCORDS WITH THE HIGHEST DUTY.

It is plainly the duty of every man to do God's will, by acknowledging His authority and complying with all the obligations of his own moral nature. Now, belief in Jesus fills the heart with supreme love to God and fellow-love to men. The test, then, requires only what is in accordance with duty and privilege. It gives that view of the Divine character which enables a man truly to love God.

By believing Christ we perceive God to be the loving Father, giving us the highest possible proof of His gracious purpose of salvation ; and this new perception secures peace and confidence, the blessed consciousness of which is the final proof that He was sent from the Father.

IV. AND WITH REASON.

The believer acts in a reasonable manner ; for he acts in accordance with the principles of science and the nature of things. Inquiring after the way of peace, he has received directions acting upon which has secured him peace, and the consciousness of this peace is to him assured knowledge that Christ is true.

V. BELIEF AWAKENS DIVINE LIFE IN THE SOUL.

It is impossible to believe His doctrines without becoming conscious of the Divine life. Men are the offspring of God, but through sin have become children of evil ; but, notwithstanding their rebellion and ingratitude, are still the objects of the Fatherly love of God, who, in the display of that love has given the most stupendous manifestation of self-sacrifice possible even to Godhead, and who is now, in Christ, offering to every human being free and full forgiveness of all his sins, and an eternal life of fellowship with Himself. Men cannot believe this without being fired with love to God. A man cannot believe that God, in the tenderness of His Fatherly heart, is eager to embrace every repentant sinner, to raise him to the highest honours, array him in the brightest glory, and fill him with the purest bliss, without returning to God in penitent humbleness. He cannot believe that Christ has triumphed over the principalities and powers of darkness, and is now overruling all evil incidental to the present condition of His people for their higher ultimate good, without cherishing a glorious hope. And if the vilest of sinners, by believing in Jesus, may become a redeemed saint, none need despair.

VI. THIS AWAKENING OF THE DIVINE LIFE IS
THE HIGHEST WORK OF THE GODHEAD.

The love, gratitude, admiration, confidence, and delight thus awakened in the believer are the essential elements of the life of God in the soul, the first beginnings of blessedness, and of security for time and eternity. To bestow the consciousness of such a life is an achievement worthy of the Incarnate One. To establish and carry forward to perfection a spiritual reign over the mind and life of men is a more illustrious undertaking than the conquest of all the kingdoms of earth. A loving spirit is the highest workmanship of God. To bring back the rebellious spirit into loving obedience is the most Divine work of Godhead. To love God is to be conscious of the purest and most elevating bliss. If the object of love be worthy of affection, it will ever be unfolding more and more of its loveliness. As God is the worthiest object of love, He is ever unfolding to the heart of the believer more and more of His infinite loveliness; and thus the believer realises the highest enjoyment possible to a finite being. Moreover, love assimilates the lover to the character of the object loved. Love to Christ draws the believer into likeness with Him. He

is thus enabled to overcome all evil, to rise above temptation, to reach the loftiest regions of unselfish and Godlike life, and to learn by blessed experience that "all things work together for good to them that love God."

VII. AND THE PERFECTION OF HUMANITY.

Nothing, for the spiritual good of man, is needed but belief of the truth as it is in Jesus. This is to be bound in blissful bonds to all that is highest in being, to all that meets and satisfies every nobler craving of humanity, regulates every power and faculty, and secures the true end of existence. What more is required for salvation? To be raised out of darkness and conflict into peaceful fellowship with the Divine; to exchange the dread of coming wrath for the joyous anticipation of glory; the realisation of *this* inner change is the highest evidence that the doctrine which has effected it is the power of God unto salvation.

VIII. CHRIST'S ACHIEVEMENT OF IT IS PROOF OF HIS DIVINE MISSION.

That Christ at such an expense of self-sacrifice has secured this high spiritual life to every believer in Him, is proof decisive of His deep insight into the nature of man; and that man,

through belief of Christ's doctrine, should realise the Divine life, is not alone convincing proof of His Divine fulness, but it is the crowning deed of God's grace, and a marvellous illustration of His wisdom. No degree of condescension or depth of self-sacrifice is too great for the parental heart. In the salvation of Christ, human well-being is not suspended on man's doing some great thing; for example, on his reading the mechanism of the heavens, penetrating into the secrets of universal nature, discovering the true character of God, performing untold deeds of beneficence: it is linked inseparably with simple belief of the gospel proclaimed by the Son of God, in doing the will of the Father as revealed by the Son.

IX. AND THE ATTAINMENT OF IT IS MAN'S HIGHEST HAPPINESS.

And this is the only possible means of attaining well-being. To be perfectly happy a man must cherish supreme love to God; but to be brought to love God a man must believe in the certainty of a gracious manifestation of the Divine love to Him. This is a doctrine that none but Jesus ever taught. It is exactly the doctrine required for the happiness of mankind, and adequate to all the conditions of spiritual

well-being—a doctrine which cannot be believed without the believer's realising a new state, a Divine life, a pure and elevating bliss ; and a doctrine that superstition never could have conceived, speculation never have discovered, scepticism never credit.

X. AND IT GIVES CERTITUDE TO THE
BELIEVER.

To believe the truth as it is in Jesus is to be made free from the law of sin and death, and the consciousness of this freedom is to *know* that His doctrine is of God. “If any man will do his will”—and “*this* is the will of God, that ye believe in him whom he hath sent”—“he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.” Here is a test the most reasonable that could have been propounded on so momentous a subject, within the reach of every individual, and that each may apply for himself. In this enforcement of His claim Christ displayed His profound insight.

XI. AN INFALLIBLE PERSONAL TEST WHICH
GIVES CERTITUDE MUST BE FROM GOD.

There never was, and never will be, a believer in Him who had not this “witness in himself,” that He brought to man the true remedy for all

spiritual woes. What can be more real than life? more intimately known to its possessor than a new life? more vividly realised than the consciousness of such a new life? No demonstration in Euclid, no conclusion of reason, no fact of nature, no truth of science can be known as really and directly. In giving this knowledge of the truth of His mission, Christ rose supreme above every other teacher of man. No other teacher ever did, or could, appeal to such evidence of the truth of His doctrine.

CHAPTER V.

CHRIST IN THE WORLD.

I. NO OTHER TEACHER EVER ASSUMED SUCH A POSITION.

WHAT founder of a religion or professed teacher of Divine truth, besides Christ, ever assumed such a position, or assumed it in such circumstances? Who else has assigned such a character to God, or claimed for himself such a relation to the Father? Who else has ever given forth such conceptions of his own person, or asserted of himself that by yielding to injustice he would give forth from himself the power of human well-being for time and for eternity? Who ever undertook so much for humanity, or gave such a test of his faithfulness? His teaching is not alone novel and astounding, but profound, comprehensive, consistent, perfecting all prior revelations, worthy of God, and adapted to the nature, necessities, and circumstances of man. It fits in with

human nature, and secures the well-being of all who yield to its power.

II. THERE IS A DIVINE FULNESS IN CHRIST'S TEACHING.

The originality, unity, and comprehensiveness of Christ's teaching ; its profound depth and sublime height ; its adaptation to human nature, suitability to the character, and agreement with the order of being in which man stands ; and its harmony with all truth, strike the minds of all students of Christianity. Such teaching never fell from the lips of any other. It sounded the depths of the Godhead, and revealed the inmost secrets of the human spirit. Tested by experience, it is found to meet the wants, to energise the powers, revolutionise the life, and secure the well-being of every man who receives it, by giving him the consciousness of a Divine quickening in his soul.

III. ON THE HUMAN SIDE IT WAS EQUALLY PROFOUND AND ORIGINAL.

In His statement of the conditions of human well-being, Christ was equally original and profound. He showed that the primary condition of happiness is to be emptied of the spirit of self.

Whilst this spirit rules in the heart the Divine Spirit cannot enter in and reign. Those who mourn the reign of the selfishness in themselves will be plastic to the power of the Divine, will long to be in right relationship with God, will cherish the spirit of mercy, be pure in heart, live in the vision of God, and ever advance in the realisation of His life in their own.

IV. IT EVINCES A DIVINE KNOWLEDGE OF HUMAN CHARACTER.

This is a perception which could only spring from the Eternal Reason, and be brought to light by a Divine Teacher. It reveals to us that such is the eagerness of the Divine Being to possess and fill the human heart, that in every possible way, and to the utmost conceivable extent, this end is sought ; that whenever a human spirit is emptied of self, becomes teachable in the Divine hand, and longs for His fulness, from such a spirit is removed all that veils the face of the Father, it is purified from all that hinders God from dwelling in and manifesting Himself to it—the life is consecrated as a holy habitation of God, to realise His blessedness and manifest His glory throughout eternity.

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V. AND EXPLAINS ALL MORAL PROBLEMS.

In His assertion that man by nature is the offspring of God, but in life the child of evil, Christ shed a light on the condition of man which explains the disquieted and degraded state of humanity, and on God's providential dealings with the whole race; a light of which no pagan philosopher had ever obtained the faintest glimpse.

In His revelation of the self-sacrifice of the Godhead on man's behalf He was not alone original; but so peculiar is this revelation that it at once affords to man the knowledge of what he could never have otherwise discovered, and at the same time supplies him with the only power of permanent well-being. And his undertaking to create this power, by yielding himself unresistingly up to the powers of darkness, was an idea opposed to any that has ever yet sprung from the mind of man.

VI. AND IS OPPOSED TO ALL MERELY HUMAN CONCEPTIONS.

No less original is His teaching that through faith in Him the greatest sinner may become a saint. This doctrine is the reverse of the world's conception, and yet it is the very truth needed to speak directly to the heart of the

most degraded being, and to animate him with a courage equal to the necessities of his fallen condition. His design of conquering and overruling all evil by the sacrifice of Himself, so as to secure the fuller manifestation of the perfections and powers of the Godhead, and the glory and bliss of man, supplied His followers with a motive fitted to nerve them to arduous encounter with the difficulties of their present condition. A design of this kind could never have been learned from man.

His doctrine concerning the character of God and the conditions of human well-being were the exact reverse of what the world looked for. That the world was not prepared to receive Him was shown in His crucifixion. It is still shown by the opposition raised to the spread of His truth and the progress of His reign. And yet it is the precise truth most in accordance with the character of God, and most necessary for the life of the world. What a contrast between Christ's conception of Himself and the Eastern notion of incarnation ; or the Western idea of apotheosis ; or the Jewish expectation of a Messiah ! How profound His conception ! how absurd and degrading the others ! How opposite are His teachings to the guesses of the speculative, the denials of the sceptical, the notions of

the superstitious ! In the one sphere of thought we are in sunlight ; in the other we are shut up in gloom and despair. How different His conception of man compared with the doctrines of the philosophers ! How elevating the power of the one, how degrading the influence of the other ! At what a distance is His purpose of creating from Himself, by His suffering and death, that display of the Divine love which slays the enmity of the carnal mind, and fires the spirit of man with filial devotion, from the heathen notions of man's deliverance through sacrifices, penances, and supplications ; and from the rule of life exhibited in Sadducean scepticism, Pharisaic self-righteousness, Essene pietism, or those notions of atonement, entertained by not a few who still cling to Jewish opinions in the Christian Church ! The one was sublime and transforming, the others were alike injurious to man and insulting to God. How divinely simple the conception of salvation by faith compared with that of working out redemption by a meritorious righteousness !

VII. THESE CONSIDERATIONS DEMONSTRATE THE TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY.

From all these considerations it follows that Christ is indeed the Saviour of the world. And

if to these considerations the following facts be added the evidence becomes unanswerably clear: The doctrines of Christ, whilst revealing the deep things of God, and meeting the urgent necessities of man, are yet so clear, profound, and comprehensive, that a complete knowledge of them approaching to His own—nay, even a far less acquaintance — requires patient and laborious study beyond the lifetime of the most diligent student. Yet this does not arise from any obscurity in the statement, confusion in the thought, or contradiction in the doctrines, but from the infinite depth of the truth revealed. The doctrine is so clear in its elementary principles that “he that runneth may read,” and is so adapted to the necessities of man that it has only to be believed in order to realise its power. It is like water from the bubbling spring that can at first be waded by the foot of a child, but in the deep ocean-bed is unfathomable by the plummet ; or like the light of heaven, so clear in itself as to reveal all objects, yet so subtle as to baffle the most penetrating efforts to explain its nature.

Those who have most patiently and perseveringly studied His truth are the readiest to acknowledge that after all their prolonged and strenuous endeavours they have been able to

obtain little more than glimpses of its profound import. Even St. Peter spoke of "a light shining in a dark place," and St. Paul of seeing but "through a glass darkly;" and St. John tells us that the book which the Lamb unsealed could be opened by "no man in heaven nor in earth."

How, then, did Christ, in His brief life of laborious employment and adverse circumstances, come to the perfect and comprehensive knowledge of His own truth? How to account for the fact that the untaught carpenter of Galilee disclosed truth which, clear in its statement and harmonious in its relations, is so original in its principles, so profound in its doctrine, so unfathomable in its depths, as to be beyond the full penetration of the most acute of His own disciples? And how to explain the fact that He so knew and understood its operations in the life of its believers, as to be able to declare, in the most unqualified manner, that all who do the will of God shall know in their deepest consciousness and experience that it is of God?

VIII. CHRIST'S DOCTRINE TRANSCENDS ALL
WORLDLY WISDOM.

These doctrines, moreover, are not only consistent with themselves, but they entirely agree with the nature of man, the dictates of reason, and the requirements of God. Christ has so revealed God as not alone to enlighten the human mind on the high problems of man's spiritual and eternal existence, but even in regard to the things of this life politicians, philanthropists, and philosophers have come to the knowledge of truth, and have been able to attain their ends, only in the measure in which they have imbibed His Spirit, acted on His principles, followed His teachings. Those, conversely, who have been ignorant of or opposed to His principles have failed in their attempts. And those men who have blended their own notions with the doctrines of Christ have succeeded in their efforts, or have failed in their attempts, just in the degree in which they have followed Him, or have acted on their own principles and motives. All who have complied with His teachings have realised their elevating and sanctifying power, just in the measure in which they have inbreathed His Spirit and copied His example. The wise of this world

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may speculate in philosophy, explore science, struggle through political revolutions, but never will they attain peace and attain happiness until they give themselves to be guided by Him.

IX. THE AUTHOR MUST HAVE BEEN GOD.

These facts lead us irresistibly to the conviction that Christ's doctrine is the voice of the Creator. There is in the teaching a depth, a breadth, an adaption to the nature and destiny of man, which could have been imparted to it only by God Himself. We are shut up to the conviction that Christ is the very source of truth, and therefore could speak with confidence of the results of compliance with His own commands.

X. CHRIST ALONE, OF ALL MEN, FULLY LIVED OUT HIS OWN DOCTRINES.

The doctrines were perfectly exemplified by Him in His life. But of whom else, from His day till now, can it be said that they lived up to the full requirements of His doctrine? Who could take up His challenge to His enemies, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" Who could say, with Him, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do"? And does not His own exemplification of His doctrine enable Him to say, with complete confidence, "If any

man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God”?

XI. CUMULATIVE FORCE OF THE ARGUMENT.

When we contemplate the originality and adaptation of Christ’s doctrine to man’s condition, His perfect comprehension of His own truth, His exemplification of it in His own life, the profound wisdom He displayed in the statement of its fundamental principles in the Beatitudes, the exquisite beauty with which He wove these into His parables, the tact with which He met and refuted His adversaries, the unworldly character of His conception of the nature of human happiness, His meek and forgiving demeanour in His death—the conclusion is forced on us that, “Truly this was the Son of God.”

XII. CHRIST IS HIMSELF THE CENTRE OF HIS SYSTEM.

The means He professed to employ in the founding of His kingdom were the manifestations of Himself, as applied by His Spirit in the regeneration and sanctification of the soul. And what He requires of the world, in order to the success of His undertaking, is supreme affection to His person, admiration of His character, devotion to His service, unqualified surrender of

spirit and entire consecration to Him, the repudiation of all pre-possessions, and of all material property that are not held for His cause and consecrated to His service.

And what are the terms on which He promises deliverance from the evils of life and rest to the soul? The sole condition He requires is belief in Himself. Is *this* the consummation of pretentious vanity? Is it not rather the sure and well-grounded confidence of Almighty God? If, then, the doctrines of Christ be such as respond to the necessities of man's nature, and to the circumstances of his life; if they attest His profound and comprehensive wisdom; if the integrity and uprightness of His life be unquestionable; if these doctrines secure the consciousness of the Divine life for every one who receives them—is it not the wildest folly to treat lightly the truth He teaches and the claim He prefers?

XIII. SUMMARY OF THE ARGUMENT.

The sum of the argument is, that the state of the world at the appearance of Christ, the position He took up in it, and the confidence with which He assumed His position, are all clear and unanswerable proofs of His supernatural mission.

BOOK SECOND.

CHRIST'S EXAMPLE SUPERHUMAN.

CHAPTER I.

THE IDEAL OF SELF.

I. SELF, REAL AND FALSE.

SELF is a term of varied and even opposite significations, as the thing is capable of different manifestations. Primarily, it denotes the true being and life. It also denotes a man's conception of how he regulates his nature in the actions of life. It is employed in Scripture, as in common language, to express both the true and false self. The *real* self is the proper object of love and care. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Here it is made the object of self-respect, as it was originally created by God, after the type of humanity in the Divine mind. A man thus self-loving is virtuous and divine. He loves *self*, not only in himself, but in every individual of the race.

Self also denotes a man's ideal or conception of what he is and should be. This is far from being the exact counterpart of the *real* nature

and life. Thus the ideals in the minds of men are of endless varieties, no two agreeing in every respect, either with each other or with the typal condition of humanity. The ideals cherished in individual minds are, in fact, idols that have no existence but in the conception. To this self the Saviour alludes : " If any man will be my disciple, let him deny HIMSELF."

II. THE WORLD-SELF AND THE DIVINE IDEAL.

There is also a self that may be denominated the world-self of man, containing all shades of the ideal self. So the human countenance always wears the peculiar aspect of the individual, and also the aspect common to all. In the mind there is the common ideal, and likewise the conception peculiar to the individual. This ideal captivates the heart. To reach it men have ever striven. This is the self characterised as " the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life." And, like the individual self, so this common ideal is an idol, a vanity, having nothing corresponding with it in reality. There is also the perfect attainable self of man, considered as fallen. This is the exemplar of humanity manifested in Christ. *There* was the perfection at once of the real humanity and of human life. It was the counterpart of the

type in the Infinite Mind. Such an exhibition of perfect humanity in a world of sin exhibits human life encountering evil, as differing from what would have been the true human life in uninterrupted fellowship with God. The exhibition, if not so lovely as the original type, is all the more noble, heroic, and Divine. Admiration for, and desire after, this proper self every human being would covet if he but saw his true nature and knew his Divine opportunities.

III. THE SPIRITUAL PRECEDES THE MATERIAL.

Self, *felt* in the sentient being, is *known* in the intellectual, and *realised* in the spiritual being. The spiritual is first in the order of being. Spirit is the substance of the Divine. "God is a spirit." The spiritual underlies all orders of existence. "The earth was without form, and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the *Spirit of God* moved upon the face of the waters." And, as in the old, so in the new creation. Christ commanded His disciples not to commence their work of evangelising the world until they had received the gift of the Holy Spirit. "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, *until ye be endued with power from on high.*"

IV. CHRIST POSSESSED ALL THE FULNESS OF THE DIVINE SPIRIT.

The perfection of Christ's nature, character, and work was grounded in His possessing the Spirit of God in unlimited fulness. "God gave not the spirit by measure unto him." And He ever acted in and by the Spirit of God. Such complete oneness with the Spirit of the Father is the highest attainment of the Christian. The incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ preceded, and were necessary to, the descent of the Holy Spirit.

V. MAN'S SPIRIT IS PURELY SELFISH.

Spirits are of different principles and degrees. We speak of good and bad spirits, generous and selfish, weak and powerful, mean and noble, Divine and Satanic spirits. We speak of the spirit of an individual, a party, a nation. And as is the spirit, so are the life and character of the individual, party, or nation. In falling from God, man brought himself under the power of the selfish spirit—the false principles of life. And while he is under its power he descends deeper and still deeper in the scale of being.

CHAPTER II.

THE WORLD-SELF.

I. SELF-LOVE, FALSE AND TRUE.

THE spirit of the world is the spirit of selfishness. Gratification of self is the dominant power in the life of man unchristianised. But selfishness must be distinguished from the spirit of true self-love. This is the divinest of all spirits. The higher a man rises in the scale of being, nearer to the Divine, the more he must esteem and value himself. This self-love is the noblest that animates any being. It has its perfection in God's own self-love. The love of the essence and constitution of being is the perfection of life, and it gives to all right intelligence the determination to abide in and act for the preservation of the highest life, at whatsoever expense of self-sacrifice. This is the spirit which animates the Godhead. The spirit of the world, on the contrary, seeks individual ends, personal gratification at any risk or

expense, even at the cost of well-being, whether its own or that of others. The spirit of the world, therefore, is not one but legion—as manifold as the objects which captivate the desires of men.

II. FALSE SELF-LOVE ENSLAVES AND DEGRADES.

These spirits, ruling in the heart, war against the Divine elements of being and life. They usurp the throne of the heart, reign in the soul, dread and withstand the reception of the Spirit of God, degrade the being, torture the life. True demons they are, which must be expelled from the hearts of men if the world is ever to attain a condition of blessedness.

The price paid for what these spirits bring of gratification, possession, distinction, is fearfully high. They tyrannise in the physical, intellectual, and spiritual life; in the national, social, and individual life. They are “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, the pride of life;” ever active to gratify the love of pleasure, greed of gain, ambition of self-advancement. Not that pleasures, possessions, honours are in themselves wrong: far from it. The desire for them is necessary to the attainment of virtue and greatness. But when they are sought as ends, not as means, degradation and bondage are the inevit-

able results. Self-seeking is “evil, and only evil continually,” in the lives of those who abandon themselves to it.

III. ILLUSTRATIONS OF THIS FACT.

The voluptuary degrades himself, and wrongs the victim of his lusts. Intemperance ruins the drunkard and entails misery on himself and all dependent on him. Vanity renders its victim insensible to the wrongs it inflicts on the poor workers who toil at untimely hours for its gratification. Habitual attendance at theatres renders people indifferent to the social condition and spiritual welfare of those who amuse them. Gambling sinks the gambler in the scale of being, eats out of him, as a canker, all generous and manly feeling.

IV. SELFISHNESS IS ALSO DELUSIVE, CRUEL, AND MORALLY RUINOUS.

And selfish pleasure-seeking is deluding, disappointing, necessarily suicidal. It robs the pleasure-seeker of all pure and lasting enjoyments in the pursuit of what is pure and noble, leaves him a prey to cloyed appetites and the bitterness of keen regret. An individual or a community given up to pleasure-seeking sinks into moral degradation and ruin. This lesson

is taught in every page of history. Love of gain degrades the idolater of wealth. Lust of conquest brings fearful havoc into national and social life, and works measureless evil to nations. Eager desire for gain leads to fraud and oppression of numberless degrees and forms. The efforts of fallen man to acquire merit in the sight of Heaven produce all forms of idolatry and superstition, which, so far from emancipating the spirit, only enslave it the more. Nor are these the only evils produced by false conceptions of God ; persecutions of so-called heresy, conflict with error, have wrought numberless miseries to mankind. But it is easier to yield to the spirits of selfishness ourself than to wrest others from their grasp. By violating the law of God, and severing fellowship with the Divine, we voluntarily come under the sway of the spirits which lead us captive "at their will." Tyrants and tormentors, they reign only to pervert the dispositions and powers, to the injury of those in whom they rule. All evil is simply perversion of spirit in relation to power and means. The great enemy of mankind is both a perverted spirit and the spirit of perversion. Wherever his spirit reigns he works only evil to its victim, and to all who are influenced by him.

V. THE EVIL SPIRIT OF SELFISHNESS EX-
CLUDES THE DIVINE SPIRIT.

But they are greater evils still in their exclusion of the true spirit of well-being. Antagonistic spirits cannot dwell and rule in the same heart. The reign of the evil spirit is a threefold calamity : it is loss of good, the presence of evil, and the exclusion of the Divine. As the spirit of fallen man is grovelling in its disposition, so his principle of life is downward in its progress. The selfish man prefers the carnal to the Divine, the temporal to the spiritual and eternal. His sole aim is to gain the advantage over others. Instead of perceiving the evil of his selfishness he defends it on the ground of patriotism, the necessity of securing the advantages of civilisation, and the promotion of social good. But in all this he is perverting the very order of life, violating the requirements of universal well-being, and losing the substance for the shadow of life.

VI. YET INDIVIDUAL AND UNIVERSAL WELL-
BEING ARE COMPATIBLE.

Nevertheless, the perfection of individual life is by no means antagonistic to the general good. These are, on the contrary, essentially one. It is superstition that makes the one clash with the

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other, and that sets aside or depreciates temporal well-being as incompatible with, or opposed to, the spiritual and eternal existence.

VII. A DEFECT OF SPIRIT OR PRINCIPLE MARS THE EXAMPLE.

If the spirit and the principle of life be essentially defective, the example can neither be perfect nor beneficent. Amongst all those who have ever laboured for the well-being of men not one has left a perfect example for imitation.

VIII. AND MISLEADS IN THE SEARCH AFTER HAPPINESS.

The inhabitants of the ancient world, because of the spirit which animated them, could not but fail in their search after happiness, could not but descend in the scale of humanity. The descent was necessitated by the exact measure in which the law of selfishness acted on them. Thus it is that all their representative men, without one exception, exhibited lives far beneath the standard of the world's own conception of true worth.

CHAPTER III.

SELF-EMANCIPATION IMPOSSIBLE.

I. SELFISHNESS CANNOT ACHIEVE ITS OWN FREEDOM.

SELF-EMANCIPATION is, from the very nature of things, impossible to the selfish. An idolater clings to his idol with tenacity—he is bound to it both from fear and love ; either of them a powerful motive, but united they are the strongest of all ties. Self is the idol which, above all others, has held the world in bondage and received the most implicit homage. But the idea that the direst evils spring from idolatry of self is a conception that never occurs to the idolater. Thus it is that moralists and philosophers have never joined in condemnation of *self*. Not one of them has ever said : “ If any man will be my disciple, let him *deny himself*.”

II. THE REASON OF THIS.

And the reason is obvious. The spirit of selfishness cannot be cast out by mere moralis-

ing, nor by any endeavour at self-reformation. These are but momentary effects, that play on the surface of life, but never descend into the depths of the soul. No effort to alleviate the individual or social condition of mankind *can* be successful that is made in an attempt to put down evil by simply denouncing and condemning it.

III. NO SELFISH MAN DESIRES EMANCIPATION.

Emancipation from the bondage of self has never been achieved by any "man of the world," never even desired by him. The reason of this is not far to seek. No man, by the light of nature, has ever sought to overcome the SELF—the idol of his heart. The bare supposition of his doing so involves a contradiction.

It is not seen that to escape from the evils *around* us we must first escape from the evil *within* us. Reason has not led men to perceive that they can escape from the dominion of *evil* alone by escaping from the bondage of *self*. Thus it is that the world has ever been contending with evil to little or no purpose.

CHAPTER IV.

BONDAGE AND EMANCIPATION.

I. EMANCIPATION COMES FROM WITHOUT.

EMANCIPATION, then, can only come from without. To bring man to this conviction was the end of God's providential dealings with the world during the whole period of its existence before Christ. The heathen world was left to its own exertions, in order that it might devise and put forth its highest endeavours to better its moral condition. Yet at the close of the period the ablest and best men were forced to declare that, if man was ever to realise deliverance from evil, he must wait till the gods should interfere on his behalf.

II. IT IS, IN FACT, GOD'S GREATEST WORK.

But with all the experience of its own helplessness, to convince the race of its insufficiency to achieve emancipation is the greatest work of God. The evil that comprehends all others

is idolatry of self, and bondage to self is the necessary penalty of transgression of the laws of well-being. So long as man was loyal to God and the law of right, he was bound to his own chief good by a clear perception of its loveliness, and by pure delight in it; but in his transgression of the laws of well-being, he lost the perception and the delight, and brought himself under the bondage of self. "No man can enter a strong man's house and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man, and then he will spoil his goods." A power superior to self is necessary in order to emancipation from its bondage. Where could selfish man discover such a power? How could he have been induced to embrace such a power, if discovered, and to enthrone it in his heart?

III. CHRIST'S VOLUNTARY SACRIFICE THE ONLY POWER THAT CAN ACHIEVE IT.

Ensphered in self, man cannot go out to inquire after such a power—cannot conceive of its existence, or believe in its reality. The power must be brought directly into contact with self, and by contact overcome it. From the very nature of the case, it must be super-human—a power emanating from God. And it only arises out of the self-sacrifice of Christ.

Here was the point at which all merely human attempts for the regeneration of the world broke down. They did not apply *an adequate force* to break the power of self.

IV. BECAUSE IT IS THE OPPOSITE AND MORE POWERFUL FORCE.

The overmastering power must be a power that can invade the realm of self, and expose the hideousness of self to man's own view. The want of the world was the existence of a spirit, a principle, and an example superior and opposite to its own, a power that could expel from self its inmost spirit, and re-animate it with the spirit of self-sacrifice. And this power must descend from the self-sacrificing spirit of the Divine Being Himself. No spirit can create itself; the spirit of self-sacrifice could not produce itself in the very heart of selfishness. Like produces like. The self-sacrificing spirit must be infused into man ere he can possess, rejoice, and live in the manifestation of it.

CHAPTER V.

SELF-SACRIFICE.

I. TRUE AND FALSE SELF-SACRIFICE.

SELF-SACRIFICE does not consist in the renunciation of any power or faculty of nature, of any possession or enjoyment or advantage in social life. Such displays of self-denial insult the wisdom and beneficence of the Creator. It does not consist in forsaking intercourse with the world, or seclusion in the monastic cell or *nun's prison*, in order that we may attain to a more religious life. Instead of being self-sacrifice, this is selfishness in one of its worst forms. True self-sacrifice is permitting wickedness to wrest from us by violence what we value, and meekly yielding to injustice in order that we may give a mirror in which it may see its own character reflected, and also the extent to which we are willing to suffer on its behalf. It is parting with—even at the expense of a right eye or a right hand—whatever comes between our hearts and our progress in the Divine life.

II. THE TRUE IS BOTH ACTIVE AND PASSIVE.

True self-sacrifice is both passive and active. In the one form it is possible even to a Divine Person living among sinful beings. In the other form, it is necessary to the perfect life and enjoyment of the fallen among the fallen. But this latter is impossible to unfallen beings. In a sinless world there cannot be any wresting through violence and injustice of anything highly prized by any. Neither can holy beings be required, for their own benefit, to part with anything opposed to the glory of God and their own well-being.

But it is necessary to well-being in a sinful world, and it is the most beneficent and blessed spirit in which fallen beings can live. "It is impossible but that offences will come." The spirit of self-sacrifice is the only spirit that enables men to receive wrongs with benefit to themselves, and to turn them to the advantage of the wrong-doers.

III. ITS INTRINSIC NOBLENESSE.

It is the noblest spirit in which men can act ; and this is felt even by the world itself. The world deifies those whom it believes to have acted most in accordance with its conception of self-sacrifice. It extorts the admiration even of

the selfish. The spirit of self-sacrifice is also the purest and most blessed that can be cherished. It is "twice blessed"—in those who cherish it, and in those on whom its influence falls. It establishes the harmony of the inner life, and ripens the soul for the fuller enjoyment of the glory and bliss of heaven.

IV. IT COULD NEVER HAVE BEEN OF HUMAN ORIGIN.

This spirit, necessary to the well-being of the race, could never have been perceived, or spontaneously acted on, by man himself. It was unknown to the world, and inconceivable by "the carnal mind."

V. IT IS AN ATTRIBUTE OF GOD.

Self-sacrifice is the most glorious attribute of the Divine Being, the one perfection of the God-head which underlies and consecrates all the others. Self-seeking was the cause of the first sin, and it is active in every transgression. It ignores the primary conditions of all true enjoyment, and the necessary relation of the creature to the Creator. Only by the inbreathing of the spirit of self-sacrifice can man overcome the evils of his fallen existence and turn them to advantage.

VI. AND THE NOBLEST OF ALL.

In the spirit of self-sacrifice it is that God has manifested the highest of His Divine perfections, accomplished His greatest work, and lavished His largest benefits on the universe. It is in the same spirit that the Church shines in her purest radiance, attracts the attention of the world, achieves for it the highest good. The world itself grants it to be the noblest spirit that can animate the human heart. The Son of God has given to sinners the final, the sublimest example of self-sacrifice. The true martyrs in His cause are those who have most closely imitated Him in His Godlike work. Was it, indeed, for the display of Christ's wondrous love that sin was permitted to invade God's fair dominion?

CHAPTER VI.

THE WORLD'S GREATEST NEED.

I. THE SELFISH WORLD NEEDED THE OPPOSITE SPIRIT.

THE world stood in need of a spirit and an example another and different from its own. It had declined in all that was true and elevating as it advanced in years. At the appearing of Christ it had sunk into the lowest conceivable condition, both morally and religiously. Under the dominion of self it was impossible for it to advance. It had no true devotion to God or to the well-being of the race. Not that man is naturally undevotional and unpatriotic. But his devotion is not towards what is absolutely holy, just, and right, and his patriotism is neither love to all mankind nor self-sacrificing devotedness to the good of the race. The slave of self can never rise to the conception of the absolute right of self-sacrifice or of the glory and blessedness attending it.

II. WHICH MUST BE OF PURELY DIVINE ORIGIN.

Christ never could have caught His spirit of self-sacrifice from the world. His demand of all men that they shall sacrifice to Him the idols of the heart, and His laying down His life for His enemies, were Divine and not of earth.

III. A FALLEN BEING CANNOT LOVE THE ABSOLUTELY RIGHT.

Where the love of right is supreme, transgression of the law of right is impossible. Such transgression became possible only through temptation swaying the affections of the heart from the absolute right. Now satisfaction can only come from the conviction of acting in conformity with right. Conviction of wrong is ever an unwelcome guest in the chambers of the soul, and it can only be expelled by some attempt to justify the deed, or the life, by the conviction that it was right, in the circumstances, so to act or live. The service of self degrades and isolates. But true being is secured by living in accordance with the constitution and relations of existence ; and the enlightened pursuit of perfection includes the love of absolute right, the knowledge of the true, and devotion to universal well-being.

IV. ONLY THROUGH SELF-SACRIFICE IS SELF-ELEVATION POSSIBLE.

It is only by sacrificing self to the pursuit of the Divine and the fraternal that any man can raise himself in the scale of being, and aid in the lifting up of the race. It is a noble, an illustrious deed. He snaps asunder the bands of a galling servitude and rises into the enjoyment of true liberty. He gives his heart to the absolutely holy, just, and good. He perceives the essential dignity of his own humanity. He devotes himself to its true well-being in every member of the race.

V. SELF-SACRIFICE IS A DIVINE REVELATION.

But no man of himself can ever cast off the bondage of self. It is only in full view of the real and the true—only in seeing the infinitely lovely and Divine, devoting itself on his behalf, so as to display at once its own true beauty and the hideousness of self—that a man can be led to sacrifice himself in the cause of truth and goodness. Human nature of itself could never have created such a vision, never could have formed the most distant conception of it. Only by some signal and amazing deed of self-sacrifice on the part of the Godhead on behalf of

mankind could that conception have been framed. Christ it was who gave both the vision and the reality of this wondrous condescension of the Godhead.

CHAPTER VII.

THE REVELATION OF SELF-SACRIFICE.

I. SELF-SACRIFICE UNKNOWN TILL CHRIST REVEALED IT.

THE spirit of self-sacrifice was unknown until disclosed by Christ. How could a world sunk in selfishness conceive of sacrificing what it idolised? or conceive that such sacrifice was necessary to its own well-being? That an individual might voluntarily undergo suffering for the benefit of others—might, like Marcus Curtius, for the good of a nation, plunge into the gulf—is not inconsistent with this general averment. But to part with the idols of the heart, or to give up the life to shame, scorn, anguish, the hiding of the Father's face, was a conception of self-sacrifice that never entered into the heart of man to conceive.

II. HE REVEALED IT IN HIS LIFE AND DEATH.

The spirit of Christ's life, as well as His death, was, as His very enemies admit, in all

respects the very spirit of self-sacrifice. The life was perfect, both in relation to God and man. The death was all that was necessary for the glory of God in the salvation of man. His was the only life ever lived on earth that can be presented as a perfect model to all others. It combined, as no other life ever did, majesty with meekness, zeal with prudence, gentleness with firmness, patience with sensibility, dignity with submissiveness, ardent attachment with impartial discernment, the decision of courage with the tenderness of love, the demeanour of the sovereign with the serenity of the martyr. Consistency, calmness, beauty, grace were apparent in all that He said and did. In His teaching He disclosed in clear and luminous truth, without one shade of error or defect, the being and character of God, the nature, condition, and wants of man, the principles of human well-being, the way of life—all that was necessary for man to believe in order to realise a glorious immortality in the presence of God.

III. THE PERFECTION OF SELF-SACRIFICE IN CHRIST'S LIFE.

He moved among all classes of men and phases of character without flattering or favour-

ing. He taught clearly, warned faithfully, rebuked undauntedly. He unswervingly declared the will of God and the duties of men wherever He went. He kept society with publicans, harlots, and Pharisees without the slightest touch of sin, taint of immorality, or tarnish of self-righteousness. He was present at the wedding, the feast, and the funeral. He took part in the Temple services, the synagogue devotions, and His heart beat in unison with each varied scene through which he passed, each service in which He engaged. He slighted not the rich, but took rank with the poor, and founded His kingdom in the affections of the lowly. By no specious inducements did He allure adherents to His cause. He plainly pointed out to all who came to Him the trials they would have to encounter, the sacrifices they would have to make, and the persecutions they must endure. He affectionately spoke to men of their danger of everlasting ruin, pointed out the necessity of immediate repentance, impressively set before them the amazing love of God in giving His only and well-beloved Son to die for their salvation, and the rich rewards He would bestow upon the faithful in His cause. He spoke of the well-springs of joy in the inner depth of the believer's spirit, of the glorious

work they were to aid Him in achieving, of the bliss of conscious fellowship with the God-head through eternal ages. His life, in fine, was the life of a perfect man, and His death was the death of the incarnate God. The more closely the life and death of Christ are studied, the more intimately His character is scanned, the deeper and more fervent is the reverence with which He is regarded.

IV. HIS SPIRIT, PRINCIPLE, AND EXAMPLE ARE THE EXACT OPPOSITE OF THE WORLD'S.

The spirit, principle, and example of Christ are the reverse of the world's. They are the *adequate* power of the world's well-being, and the *only* power of its peace and happiness. It is impossible for any human being to breathe the spirit of Christ, to love His principle of life, to copy His example, without, in the exact measure of His doing so, realising peace and inner satisfaction. He cannot do this without being raised out of conscious suffering and degradation, the strife of inner wretchedness, and made superior to the world's evils.

V. AND THE ONLY MEANS OF ITS SALVATION FROM SELFISHNESS.

Christ, as the elevator of the race, not only

breathes the true spirit into man, but reveals to him his true nature, and secures for him the power necessary to raise himself. To act for God in the subordination of the personal to the Divine, the temporal to the eternal, is to act on the only principle that unites, elevates, and blesses mankind. The principle of Christ is in accordance with the constituted order of the universe—the circumstances of men; and it is the only principle that enables man to turn the facts of his present condition to true and permanent advantage.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BLESSEDNESS OF SELF-SACRIFICE.

I. CHRIST'S CALL TO SELF-SACRIFICE IS AN INVITATION TO FREEDOM.

CHRIST'S call to self-sacrifice does not invite to superstitious acts of devotion. Such acts only degrade and enslave men the more. It but summons men to that which truly emancipates, dignifies, and blesses. Knowing all the possibilities and aspirations of the human soul, He calls man to devote himself in the service of the Infinite, to the true sublime of life, to all that accords with the constituted order of the universe, and secures universal well-being.

II. AND TO HAPPINESS.

It is a summons, moreover, to engage in the struggle with all that is evil, all that degrades ; so that, by overcoming evil, men may rise into their purest consciousness, their loftiest, most blessed realisation of life here and hereafter.

III. MAN'S DOMINANT PRINCIPLE IS LOVE.

Man is formed to love. He cannot but love. He loves the beautiful, longs for the Divine, searches for fellowship with the Infinite. His very nature impels him to the love of the beautiful, his soul glows in its presence, his spirit rejoices in its contemplation. It prompts him no less to the love of the sublime, the heroic. Grandeur in external nature attracts as well as strikes ; heroism in life allures as well as arrests ; the sublime in moral action captivates as well as commands. Who has not felt the unspeakable charm of the presence of the mountain, the cataract, storm, and tempest ? Who has not been charmed by acts of self-sacrificing benevolence ? The love of the beautiful and sublime includes that of the Infinite and Divine. Man cannot rest in the possession of the finite : he desires and seeks after the Infinite. He is satisfied only with the possession of the chief good. This is a necessary law of his life, an inevitable condition of his well-being.

IV. IT IS REASONABLE IN HIM TO LOVE GOD, WHO IS INFINITE LOVELINESS.

It is, therefore, reasonable for him to love God, exhibited in the grandest display of the self-sacrifice of the Divine. What is beauty in crea-

tion compared with beauty in creation's God? What is the loveliness spread before us in material forms, in the operations of mind, in the aspirations of the soul, in the heroism of life, compared with the loveliness and grandeur of Infinite Perfection, displaying itself in some stupendous deed of self-sacrifice?

V. LOVE IS TRANSFORMING.

Man's inner life is moulded by the character of what he loves. He is ever assimilating in soul to the object of his supreme affection. The love of the beautiful softens and refines the tastes. The love of the sublime expands and elevates the mind. The love of the Divine heroism exhibited on the cross imprints on the soul the bright image of God, elevates it into higher regions of the Divine life, assimilates it to God Himself in the loftiest attributes of His character. Love to one quality of character carries with it aversion to the opposite quality. The lover is drawn to the object beloved, whilst there is raised in his breast a barrier between him and its opposite.

VI. IT IS OF TWOFOLD FORCE.

Love thus possesses a twofold power—attraction and repulsion. It excites a powerful aversion to the opposite of what it loves—a resist-

ance to whatever would draw it away from its object.

VII. AND IT YIELDS THE PUREST HAPPINESS.

There is no principle of life so blissful as love, and it is so in the degree of the purity and worthiness of the object beloved. If it be a worthy object, the love of it secures the highest enjoyment, for the state of love is the state of enjoyment, and the consciousness of worthy love is the consciousness of pure, high, and lasting enjoyment. God is infinitely worthy of love, especially in respect of His self-sacrifice on man's behalf. If the love of what is worthiest brings a bliss corresponding to its purity and the worthiness of the being loved, must not the love of God, in the ultimate condescension of His grace, secure the highest and purest bliss the heart is capable of realising ? In this love the soul is continually drinking at the stream which flows out for ever from Him who is the fount of all blessedness. So drinking, the soul is ever enlarging in its capacities for enjoyment of God ; the powers of the immortal spirit are developed in assimilation to God ; it grows the nearer in likeness to Him, and ascends into higher realisation of the Divine life.

VIII. THE HIGHEST EFFECT OF HOLINESS AND HAPPINESS IS ACHIEVED THROUGH THE CROSS.

If, then, man loves and must love the beautiful and sublime; and if this love changes him into the likeness of the object of his love, satisfying his spirit with the purest joy; and if the final perfection of the choice and sublime are seen only in the self-sacrifice of Christ, man can know no spiritual rest or satisfying joy until he rises to the adoring love of that stupendous manifestation. Whatever impulses we may feel towards loving the beauties of creation, or heroic devotedness in act, these impulses move us with incalculably greater force when directed to the glorious heroism of our Divine elder brother. If it be reasonable to love the person and admire the actions of an earthly brother, or the grandeur and sublimities of nature, how much more should we love all these manifested in the self-sacrificing Creator? And if love towards an earthly friend or benefactor draws us to imitation of him, how much more the grace and condescension of the Son of God in taking our nature into union with the Divine nature, in order that He might become our brother? His example of self-sacrificing devotion to the glory of God and the good of man is the very grandest display of

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wisdom and power that can by possibility be set before us. Christ, in giving such a display, acts toward us in accordance with all the requirements of our nature and circumstances, and all the highest aspirations of our souls.

CHAPTER IX.

CHRIST'S CALL REASONABLE AND NOBLE.

I. THE CALL TO SELF-SACRIFICE IS INTRINSICALLY NOBLE.

THE call to self-sacrifice is the noblest as well as the most reasonable that could be addressed to men. Look at the object, the action, the result of such self-sacrifice! The desire of fame is exhibited equally in war, in science, philosophy, political ambition. All these are either injurious or inadequate to the permanent good of men. But the distinctions and possessions set before us by Christ are not alone the highest possible, but they are only secured through the promotion of true and lasting benefit to ourselves and others. They concentrate our devotion, not on the material and temporal at the expense of the Divine, but on the spiritual and immortal in the promotion of the advancement of the Divine will and purpose.

II. IT IS A CALL TO A DIVINE LIFE IN GOD.

To bring the life of God into the spirit of man, so that it may enjoy the most intimate fellowship with Him, and through that fellowship give the fullest revelation of the Divine—this is the great work of the Godhead. *There* is exhibited the Father's gift of the Son ; the Son humbling Himself, becoming obedient unto death, ascending in majesty to the throne of God, sending the Spirit of grace to take up His abode in man ; the Spirit submitting Himself to be resisted and quenched the while He works faith in the heart, winning the soul to yield itself to Him, so that through His operation it may realise perfect fellowship with the Divine.

III. AND THIS IS GOD'S GREATEST WORK.

In thus accomplishing the soul's salvation, Christ sets forth the greatest work of God, a work surpassing in magnitude and grandeur all His other works in time, and the most illustrious in which man can co-operate with God. So important is it, that were the whole creation through all time to work in concert with God for the salvation of a single soul, the greatness of the end would justify the extent of even this boundless means. The soul's salvation is a

work that confers the highest honour and happiness on all engaged in it. For salvation renders existence glorious and blessed, and without it existence is a blank calamity. In the performance of this work Christ glorified the Father in the highest degree, whilst He raises the saved to the loftiest condition that finite beings can reach. For the performance of this work the Father conferred upon Him the highest honour and glory possible for Him to receive, or for the Father to bestow.

IV. CO-OPERATION WITH CHRIST SECURES BOTH THE END AND THE REWARD.

He taught that the highest results would accrue, and the most glorious rewards be given, to all who would co-operate with Him in working out the world's salvation. "A cup of cold water given to a disciple in the name of a disciple should not lose its reward." This doctrine displayed profound wisdom. The inner is more important than the outer existence. The development of the inner life is ever throwing off the incrustations of the outer life. This is the condition of all existence, from the humblest to the highest. And it is more important in proportion as the life ascends in the scale of existence. In the fellowship of Christ's work

the believer is in direct co-operation with God. "Whosoever believeth in me, the works that I do shall he do also. And greater works than these shall he do; because I go to my Father."

V. BECAUSE IT IS CO-OPERATION WITH GOD IN HIS GREATEST WORK.

The heart of God, yearning towards the filial affection of the human heart, comes in the manifestations of the Son, quickening the soul with the filial sentiment; and the soul, through its acceptance of, and co-operation with, the Divine, rises to the life of God. And it is only in the working out his own salvation, and aiding in the salvation of others, that the believer can be a fellow-worker with God in the accomplishment of His grandest purpose. This fact it is that makes life so momentous in its issues.

VI. MAN HAS A SELF-DIRECTING POWER.

Born with a constitution physical and rational, which he carries with him through life, man is capable, to a certain extent, of improving or deteriorating that constitution; but he cannot throw it off. If, in the embryo state, he had power to influence his constitution, the effects would be apparent at birth, and felt throughout the entire period of life. Now, in regard to his

after existence, man *does* possess such a power, and he carries into the eternal world the results of his own influence upon his life on earth. Such as he leaves time, he enters on his eternal existence. He carries into the future sphere his measure of capacity, susceptibility, habit, association, development in the Divine or mundane life.

VII. WHICH INFLUENCES HIS AFTER EXISTENCE.

These determine his condition and his further development. In his spiritual existence there are germs unquickened in time, but yet intimately connected with the future life. As there are faculties in the body, and powers in the mind, which remain unexercised in the embryo state, so there are capacities and susceptibilities in the soul which, unknown and unexercised in this life, are yet capable of being greatly influenced by its character, and will in the future display that influence.

VIII. CHRIST'S DOCTRINES MOULD THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVER.

The doctrines of Christ are the only teachings that read the nature, circumstances, and aspirations of man, meet his wants, and guide his life to perfect happiness. They are the very

doctrines needed for his present and future well-being. They are distant alike from the sentiments of the mere religionist, and from the notions of the man of the world ; and yet, when believed, they quicken the spirit with a Divine life, purify the heart, elevate the soul.

IX. THEY ARE ALL-COMPREHENDING.

They overlook nothing in the nature or circumstances of the individual, nor in the brotherhood of the race. They are based on a comprehensive recognition of the constitution and relations of the present and the future condition of the race. They undervalue no earthly good or temporal advantage ; but only require that, whenever there arises opposition between the spiritual and the sentient, the Divine and the worldly, His disciple shall display the true wisdom in preferring the enduring to the transitory interest. The disciple, maintaining a struggle between the powers of light and darkness, will not be left to his own wisdom, but will have the Divine aid.

X. AND TEACH ALL TRUE KNOWLEDGE.

The doctrines exhibit to man his wants, and how they are met ; his opportunities, and how they are to be turned to permanent advantage ;

his responsibilities, and what will be the result of neglecting, and the reward of attending to them. They secure the grace necessary to enable the believer to develop his life in accordance with the constituted order of being, the laws and government of God, and thus to realise present enjoyment in the pursuit of future and eternal glory. By the indwelling of the Divine Spirit they secure the removal of the spirit's unrest, and give the perfect satisfaction which is realised in its conscious possession of perfect peace.

CHAPTER X.

CHRIST'S SPIRIT THE POWER OF MAN'S WELL-BEING.

I. CHRIST'S SPIRIT ALONE CAN RAISE AND REDEEM HUMANITY.

CHRIST's Spirit is the only power that can meet the deep need of humanity, and is the true lever-power of its elevation and permanent blessedness.

The spirit of self-sacrifice is not alone Divine in itself, but it must be received in order to secure present and future glory for men. Nothing else can lift them out of the consequences of the fall. To accomplish this necessitated the highest conceivable manifestation of Divine love, and the highest act of self-sacrifice possible to incarnate God. The manifestation of this principle in full view of the world, so as to draw men to the belief of His truth and to win His disciples to copy His example, shows Christ's insight into the deepest necessities of human well-being.

II. THE SPIRIT OF GOD IS THE SOUL'S LIFE.

The sole effectual method of ejecting the evil spirit from the life is to quicken the soul with the Spirit of God. The soul was created for the Divine indwelling as truly as the body was created for the indwelling of the soul. The soul cannot live the Divine life without the indwelling of the Divine Spirit, any more than the body can have physical life without the indwelling of the soul.

III. IT WORKS IN THE SOUL LOVE TO MAN.

The love of humanity, inbreathed by the Spirit of God, fosters in the disciple of Christ the true spirit of philanthropy and of all that is conducive to it—in a word, of all the conditions of well-being both in the individual and in society.

IV. SYMPATHY WITH HUMAN PROGRESS.

The Spirit of Christ begets sympathy with all true progress. This is what Christianity is actually effecting. It is not alone baptizing individuals, but communities, with the Divine Spirit; and in proportion as it overcomes the spirit of selfishness it leavens society with right dispositions and correct ideas of what constitutes *real* well-being. It neither degrades nor

overlooks any desire, faculty, or end of human existence, but seeks and promotes the harmonious action of them all. These views of what is necessary to the realisation of the ideal existence of human society are met with only in Christ's teachings. Why the world has not been brought into this blessed realisation of His Spirit and life is traceable to no defect in His example. It comes of the reluctance of selfishness to yield to self-sacrifice.

V. AND, TO THE EXTENT IT IS RECEIVED,
REDEEMS HUMANITY.

Christ alone of all who ever lived understood human nature and its wants, and secured for man the power of his own well-being. He alone exemplified all the conditions of true greatness in humanity. Just in proportion as Christ is received does He meet the wants, supply the necessities of all who receive Him. He is "all their salvation, all their desire." He disperses the gloom of tormenting fears, gladdens the desponding spirit, and cheers the sad heart, elevates the desires, tames the fierce passions. He speaks to, acts *in*, and acts *for*, humanity as no other has ever done. He unites the civilised and savage, the learned and the ignorant, the rich and the poor, in the bonds of

a common affection, binds them in union by the strongest ties of universal brotherhood. He brings the bitterest enemies to embrace one another in love, and to live for each other's good. He turns the stream of human life out of its downward course to destruction and guides it upwards to God. He refines the manners, improves the laws, humanises the wars of nations. He improves the sciences, corrects philosophy, purifies literature, and consecrates all civilisation. He is even now saving the race by drawing it to Himself. He proves Himself in a thousand ways to be such a One as cannot be contemplated in His own light without exerting on all who look to Him an elevating power. The experience of eighteen centuries has proved that all that is necessary for the world's true and permanent exaltation is to breathe His Spirit, act on His principle, copy His example. These cannot be embraced without effecting, in all who embrace them, whatsoever is necessary for their present and everlasting perfection.

CHAPTER XI.

WHENCE DID THIS SPIRIT ORIGINATE?

I. CHRIST'S SPIRIT AND PRINCIPLE NOT OF HUMAN ORIGIN.

WHENCE came the Spirit, principle, and example of Christ? Are they of earthly origin, of merely human growth? If so, men would have been found in all ages who had lived up to them. But none have ever approached, far less reached, them. Christ stands alone amongst all that ever appeared on earth. He was "not of this world." He received nothing of His Spirit from man. His motive of obedience to God in all that He was and did, His love of all men, the devotion of His whole life to the good of mankind, His laying down His life for His enemies, praying for their forgiveness while in the very act of murdering Him, all proves that there was between His life and the life of this world an impassable gulf. The very opposition of the world to His

Spirit, the difficulties His disciples experienced in living up to His example and promoting His cause, show that neither were of this world.

II. ALL WHO HAVE IMBIBED THEM ACKNOWLEDGE THIS.

Those who have in their lives approached to His Spirit and example are first to acknowledge that, in whatever measure they have been able to do this, they have done so only by ceasing to be themselves and learning of Him.

III. THE WORLD ITSELF ADMITS IT.

This is admitted by the world itself. His claim to be not of this world is awarded even by those who have *not* learned of Him. All who admit the validity of His claim agree that He learned nothing from the world, but brought His Spirit, His principle, and example into it from His Father in heaven. They acknowledge that His claim to be able to guide the thoughts of men into all truth, to regulate the life of every human being in righteousness, is a just claim.

IV. AND THE BELIEVER REALISES IT.

It is impossible for any man who realises the great change, and is conscious of the new

life in Christ, to doubt His claim. In that consciousness he has the direct evidence that Christ is of God, that His doctrine is from heaven, that His power is Divine.

V. THE EVIDENCE IS A DEMONSTRATION.

But, indeed, if the spirit of the world be self, necessarily enslaving and degrading ; if the slave to self cannot emancipate himself, cannot conceive aright of the nature of his emancipation ; if the spirit of self-sacrifice be the only power that can deliver the slave of self ; and if *this* be the spirit that Christ has brought into the world, is it not proved with all the force of demonstration that He did not draw this spirit from the world ?

VI. THE WORLD'S OPPOSITION DEMONSTRATES IT.

Whence comes this opposition of the Spirit of Christ and the spirit of the world ? Whence the unapproachable superiority of the Spirit of Christ over that of the world ? In Him we have presented before us an absolutely perfect character, an unselfish principle of life, and a self-sacrificing devotedness to the glory of God in the good of man. To attempt to get rid of the facts of His life and death by assuming

Him to have been self-deceived or intentionally deceiving others, is an assumption that does not bear a moment's serious consideration. But if He did *not* live a life of consummate perfection, then must the Evangelists have drawn their account of His character from their own imaginations, and to assert this is the most inconceivable assumption that ever was made. At the time the Evangelists wrote there did not exist a single fragment of the characteristic elements of the life of Christ in all the extant literature or legends of mankind. There was nothing approaching to it in the conception of Jew, the Greek, the Roman. The only conceptions of such a character were hidden in the latent indications of the Old Testament; but so deeply embedded that the most acute rabbi could not perceive their faintest indications.

VII. THE ASSUMPTION OF AN INVENTION BY THE EVANGELISTS IS INCREDIBLE.

To assume that a few obscure fishermen, acting independently of each other, could depict a character of such unearthly grandeur and perfection, would be to suppose illiterate men capable of doing what all the genius and learning of a Homer, a Shakespeare, a Goethe, a Scott combined could never have been able to

approach. That these men should publish their fiction as truth in the very place and at the very time where and when their deception could have been detected and exposed ; that, instead of detection and exposure by those most capable of forming a judgment of them and of their doings, they should have been able to draw multitudes into the belief of their fiction ; that they should defy the world to prove them deceivers ; that those believing their declarations should become the wisest and best of men ; and that they should do all this without a motive and at the cost of poverty, ignominy, and violent death : to believe THIS is to lay upon human credibility a task immeasurably heavier than is implied in belief of the gospel.

VIII. THEY SURPASS ALL EFFORTS OF MERELY HUMAN GENIUS.

Further : to expect men to credit this would be to require them to believe that a few rude and uncultivated men, with a fiction in hand, could exert a greater skill of fascination on the world than all the truth, learning, and eloquence of the world has ever done ; that, although they published their declarations in numerous and distant places, and in the most public manner, courting investigations, these " self-deceivers "

had yet each discovered the secret of never contradicting himself; and that although they were brought before open tribunals, and examined by acute judges, they never showed the slightest indication of artful design, nor could be detected in the least error or inconsistency.

IX. AND ALL POWER OF MERELY HUMAN INFLUENCE.

It would be requiring men to believe that these rude, illiterate men, with their falsehood, have exerted on the nations of the earth such an enlightening and elevating influence as dwarfs into insignificance all the power of the religious and moral truth known previously in all times and countries. That the craft of ignorant and unlearned men, dealing with a falsehood, could baffle and overcome all the ingenuity of the learned and the wise. That their rude discourse could exert on all classes of mankind a power beyond that of the most consummate genius! He that is willing to believe this, let him believe it.

X. THEIR STORY OF THE PERFECT LIFE TRANSFORMS MANKIND.

That the assumed falsehood of these men could have succeeded in leading the world to

the knowledge of the highest and most comprehensive truth, to the most devout and upright life. Those who can believe this may fairly be held to be possessed of an amount of credulity vastly exceeding that of any believer in any pagan superstition, however absurd or preposterous.

XI. CHRIST, THEN, IS DEMONSTRABLY THE DIVINE SON AND SAVIOUR.

There remains nothing, then, but to accept Christ as the only Son of the Absolute Perfection, as the sublimest embodiment of self-sacrifice, as the Divine Saviour. And why should men hesitate to believe in Him? His spirit of self-sacrifice not only belongs to man, but delivers him from the bondage of evil; and, in working in him this deliverance, lifts him into the consciousness of a new and perfect life. To every believer in Him is given the most direct evidence of the truth of His mission. Would that all men would join in the ascription of the praise due to Him, "WHO LOVED US, AND WASHED US FROM OUR SINS IN HIS OWN BLOOD, AND MADE US KINGS AND PRIESTS UNTO GOD, EVEN HIS FATHER. TO HIM BE GLORY AND DOMINION FOR EVER AND EVER. AMEN."

XII. LECKY'S ADMISSION.

"It was reserved for Christianity to present to the world an ideal character which, through all the changes of eighteen centuries, has inspired the hearts of men with an impassioned love, has shown itself capable of acting on all ages, nations, temperaments, and conditions; has been not only the highest pattern of virtue, but the strongest incentive to its practice, and has exerted so deep an influence that it may be truly said that the simple record of three short years of active life has done more to regenerate and soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers, and all the exhortations of moralists. This has, indeed, been the well-spring of whatever is best and purest in the Christian life. Amid all the sins and failings, amid all the priesthood and persecution and fanaticism that have defaced the Church, it has preserved in the character and example of its Founder an enduring principle of regeneration."—*History of Morality from Augustus to Charlemagne*, vol. ii. p. 8.

BOOK THIRD.

CHRIST'S DEMAND SUPERHUMAN.

CHAPTER I.

WHENCE CHRISTIANITY?

I. CHRISTIANITY IS A FACT.

CHRIST has appeared in the world, and has left His impress on the institutions of civilisation. Christianity exists in civil society, and exerts a sovereign sway over nations of men. The existence of the Christian Church, her doctrines and institutions, are facts. The Christian Sabbath; baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; the Lord's Supper; Christian doctrine, precept, and life—all these have an indubitable historical existence. Whence came they? They must either be self-existent or produced. If produced, they are the result of some adequate cause. Who was their author?

II. CHRIST WAS ITS FOUNDER.

The Christian Church is clearly traceable to the historical Jesus Christ. The line of ecclesiastical Christianity can be distinctly followed back to the times of Christ. That prior to His

appearance there existed no Christian Church, and that the Church originated with Him, cannot be denied. Whence did He obtain the elements on which He reared His Church? From Himself or from pre-existing materials? No one will now assert that Christianity is an invention of priests, a device to hold men in subjection. Certain corruptions of the system may have been such an invention; but the *truth* of it could not have been thus invented. *That* has rather been persecuted by despots both of Church and State. Christianity, in fact, has always been the unflinching foe of despotism under all its forms, and the only successful liberator of mankind from every species of delusion.

III. A MYTHICAL ORIGIN WAS IMPOSSIBLE.

The new rationalistic theory asserts that Christianity owes its origin to the myths of bygone ages, and its peculiar character to the artful efforts of far-sighted ambition. But if so, how are we to account for the fact that Christianity makes its converts the most truthful, upright, and straightforward of men, haters of every species of fraud, of all phases of deception? The effect is ever of the same nature with its cause: does the offspring of fraud work for its own overthrow in the establishment of truth? And how could

Christianity have arisen out of mythical elements which did not exist, and could not have existed, until it had, itself, taught the very doctrines from which those myths are wrung? What is peculiar to it never was conceived of by mankind prior to Christ's appearing.

IV. IT CLAIMS TO BE DIVINE.

Christianity repudiates a corrupt source or an imaginary origin, and even a merely human origin. It dates its origin in the depths of the eternal ages, and claims to be the one all-comprehending thought of the Godhead. This is "the mystery which was kept secret since the world began," "the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world," given in Christ Jesus before the world began, "the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."

V. AND THE ULTIMATE MANIFESTATION OF DIVINE WISDOM.

Repudiating all connection with selfish craft and corrupt design, it claims to be the manifestation of a wisdom beyond that of the loftiest genius, the outcome of the profoundest wisdom of the Godhead :—"Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence." "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in

heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God." "Oh the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his counsels, and his ways past finding out." Its Author thanks His Heavenly Father that He had hid these deeper things from human genius and placed them within the reach of the feeblest faith :—" I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."

VI. AND OF DIVINE POWER.

Christianity, moreover, asserts its special power to be the most energising power wielded even by the Godhead—" But we preach Christ crucified ; unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness ; but unto them which are called, both Jew and Greek, Christ the wisdom of God and the power of God." " But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us." " The gospel is the power of God unto salvation." " We shall live with him by the power of God." " And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him

from the dead and set him at his own right hand in the heavens." It is the power of love, of the self-sacrificing love of the Godhead. "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world that we might live through him." "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

VII. NO OTHER THEORY OF ITS ORIGIN IS POSSIBLE.

There is no reasonable method whatsoever of accounting for the existence of Christianity but that which itself supplies. It is Divine in its nature, supernatural in its origin, and owes its existence to a gracious manifestation of the Godhead. This is the only satisfactory explanation of its existence and progress in the world. That it is not of man is seen in the nature, adaptation, and power of the truth it reveals, and its high, uncompromising demands. Its Author "knew what was in man." The conditions of human well-being were grasped fully by Him alone. The demand He made, none before Him ever thought of making. Not only did He make this demand, but He supplied the power of complying

with it. His views of sin in its ruinous power—how it lies on humanity an intolerable *incubus*, and of what man is capable of rising to when freed from its bondage—was peculiar to Himself. Resolved on meeting all the wants of humanity by creating the power of man's deliverance, He sets the example of a Divine life on earth. “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.” This call, and this alone, meets all the conditions of human well-being. The slave of sin must be emancipated. Man, created for the indwelling of the Divine, must be “filled with all the fulness of God.” Thirsting for glory, he must have a sublime career opened for him; ignorant of his own nature and relations, he must be led to perceive these in the clear light of truth. Beset with many and powerful temptations, he must be aroused from his lethargy, made aware of his danger, led to see his selfishness, and be assured of ultimate victory. This is the process of Christianity in the individual soul.

The very nature of its demands, so peremptory and unyielding, provokes of necessity virulent opposition. Its progress, therefore, is necessarily slow. But these demands, which seem to retard its progress, the power it imparts to comply with them, and the change it works in those who receive it, are all evidences of its Divine origin.

CHAPTER II.

CHRISTIANITY DEMANDS A RADICAL CHANGE OF LIFE.

I. CHRISTIANITY DEMANDS SELF-RENUN- CIATION.

CHRISTIANITY demands belief, repentance, a new birth. The new birth is realised in repentance ; repentance is realised in believing. Here is an inner, thorough, radical change ; a change in the objects of supreme affection, in the thoughts and understanding, in the principle and end of life—a complete revolution in the religious being. Denial of self, the suicide of the carnal mind, crucifixion of the rebel spirit, all are demanded, and of every human being. Through obedience to the truth, the man is to be led to rejoice in the overthrow of what had hitherto been his ruling power, in the destruction of what had been the governing principle of his life, in the repudiation of what had been the coveted end and sole aim of selfishness. He shall take pleasure in

bearing the cross, and glorify God that he is enabled to endure privation, suffering, and shame for Christ.

II. SUCH A DEMAND A HUMANLY-DEvised SYSTEM WOULD NEVER MAKE.

Look carefully at these demands ; deliberate on them, that they may be distinctly appreciated, with all that is implied in them ; and then say if it be possible for the system which makes such demands of every human being to have originated with man himself. Is it within the bounds of possibility that it should have been fostered in the corrupt heart, devised by the carnal mind, promoted by pure selfishness ? Look at them in the light of self-love, of the love of power, of the deeply-grounded aversion of men to change their religious belief ; and then say if it be conceivable that Christianity can be a merely human device. Had it sprung from the natural heart of man there would have been no opposition to it, no difficulty made in embracing it. All men would have been drawn to it.

III. NO INDIVIDUAL DESIRES THE DESTRUCTION OF SELF.

Has any individual of himself ever desired the destruction of self, the overthrow of the cherished

purposes of his heart, the repudiation of the idols of his religious life? Has any eagerly and earnestly longed for the destruction of the reigning power, the governing principle of his life? Has any ever of himself laboured to revolutionise his religious thoughts and deepest desires? The bare idea involves a contradiction, a blank impossibility. Yet this must have been realised in millions of instances if Christianity were of simply human origin.

IV. NO POWER WORKS FOR ITS OWN SUB- VERSION.

No principle, power, or life works for its own destruction. Such an idea is contrary to the first principle of self-preservation, involves the suicide of all life, the destruction of all power, the extinction of all existence. It is inconsistent with the existence and continuance of Nature herself. No sovereign ever desired or laboured for his own overthrow; no hierarchy ever sought and wrought for its own destruction; no idolater ever plotted for the downfall of his heart's idol. Yet all these palpable contradictions must have been common facts, if Christianity be of man. Least of all will a usurped power, a despotic sovereignty, a rebel cabinet, a revolutionary force, an idolatrous hierarchy, willingly lay down their

power, or labour to subvert it. Ask any preacher of the gospel if he has found men eager to listen to the doctrines of the cross, impatient to embrace the truth in the love of it. His answer will be that to effect a denial of self in the heart of man is the most arduous and difficult of all undertakings. But on the assumption that Christianity is of man, the accomplishment of such a change is of all things the most agreeable and easy.

In the contentions of individuals, families, states, and especially of sects, how difficult it is to induce one disputant to yield to the other, or both to come to an agreement? And when even an agreement is discussed, how careful are both sides in defining their terms and stating their conditions! How difficult it is to relinquish power, to change disposition, or to embrace sentiments and beliefs the opposite of those we have been in the habit of cherishing! How much more difficult to sacrifice self!

V. NOTHING LESS THAN AN ALMIGHTY POWER CAN SO ACCOMPLISH THE CHANGE.

So difficult is all this, that no man of himself has ever done or ever will do it. Nothing less than the almighty power of God can work the revolutionary change in the natural life. The

power is the utmost energy that God Himself exerts ; for it is the sum of His “wisdom and prudence.” The nature of the demands which Christianity makes of all men, taken in connection with the tenacity with which men cling to their idols of the heart, and the reluctance with which they change the principles of their lives, shows clearly that the system never could have originated in the human mind, or been promulgated to the world by human will.

VI. A HOLY BEING WOULD NEVER SEEK TO CHANGE ITS NATURE.

If man were a holy being, the idea of revolutionising his nature could not have originated with himself. The conception of such a change would be simply revolting to a pure spirit. But to man, the fallen creature, the idea of revolutionising his life is equally revolting. Could the doctrine which makes such a demand of him ever have originated in the heart of fallen man ? Why, these demands of Christianity it is that have aroused against it all the fierce oppositions it has encountered, all the persecutions it has suffered. Could that have originated in the very heart which loathes and labours to destroy it ?

VII. AND THE DEMAND IS MADE OF ALL MEN.

It is not of a *few*, but of *all* men, this inner radical change is demanded. Of *some* favoured mortals it is possible to conceive that self-reform is a dominant desire. But no such change as is implied in a radical, revolutionary overturning of the sentiments, principles, and ends of life in themselves, or the objects of their love, is dreamt of by even these. They have no conception of a change involving entire conformity of the inner life with the Divine principles of universal well-being. Until the age of Christ the desire for any change in the human spirit was unknown to the world.

VIII. RECONCILIATION OF DIFFERING SECTS
IS NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE.

Contemplate the difficulty of uniting all religious beliefs in one, the slow progress which union makes even among the different sections of the Christian Church : how rarely do any two sects unite ! The inherent reluctance to submit to any change in religious belief—the tenacity with which all men cling to their special creed—seems at first sight invincible.

IX. BUT CHRISTIANITY DEMANDS IT.

To come to all men, calling on them to perform an act from which every individual recoils with his whole heart—an act for the performance of which every individual is of himself utterly helpless—an act which can be accomplished only through aid imparted by God Himself—could Christianity, if it were of man, make such a demand?

X. THE PLEA THAT MAN CAN REFORM HIS OWN MORAL NATURE IS NOT TENABLE.

The change could never have suggested itself to the human mind, never have been devised by the carnal mind. It is abhorrent to the selfish heart. How could the mere conception of such a change originate there? How could the desire for it be cherished in the selfish heart? How could the effort to effect it have been made by the rebel spirit? Those who hold that Christianity is of earthly origin are bound to face this fact, and to point out how, in view of it, Christianity could have so originated. The argument has been objected to on the ground that man's is a "dual life," consisting of a good as well as a bad part, and that it is on the better part of man's nature that God operates. "To overcome the bad, He enters through the approaches of the

soul which still looks towards goodness, and closes up the approaches which lie open in the direction of badness." It is asked, "Is the better part of our being (prompted by everything that tends to elevate it) not sufficient to lead a man to revolutionise his inner life? It will not do to say that the evil in a man will not destroy itself: it must be shown further that the good in him is not strong enough to destroy it." This objection fails in two points. The argument is not that the better part of man's nature cannot destroy the evil, but the inquiry, could the demand of Christianity, that every man, through its quickening power, shall undergo an entire revolution of his inner life, originate with man himself? and it fails to perceive the testimony of history to the fact that all the efforts of mankind to improve the life have proved worse than useless.

CHAPTER III.

*CHRISTIANITY NOT ALONE DEMANDS
A CHANGE OF LIFE, BUT MAKES
KNOWN ITS NATURE.*

I. MAN FEELS HIS MORAL NEED.

MAN, let it be admitted, naturally feels his need and seeks after a change in his inner being. The savage consciously needs civilisation, the slave liberty, the sick health, the poor relief, the weary rest, the ignorant knowledge; and all feel a hungering for the indwelling of the Divine.

II. BUT DOES NOT KNOW HOW TO SUPPLY IT.

Unlike the other creatures of God, man's wants are numerous and complex, his cravings urgent, and the methods he adopts to satisfy them make him conscious of something deeply wrong within him. He does not even know the things necessary to satisfy the cravings of his soul. To obtain peace of mind, satisfaction of spirit, he has toiled, speculated, sometimes sacrificed even his dearest

possessions. Ever since the fall he has felt the pressure of an external calamity, and the burden of an internal woe. He has been conscious of disquietude, of restlessness, and to escape from this he has exerted all his ingenuity, put forth every conceivable endeavour, strained every nerve, racked his brain and tasked his inventive power to its utmost. He has sighed from the inmost depths of his immortal spirit, longed with all the earnestness of a thirsty soul, for an altered condition of existence. But instead of improving his state, he has only sunk himself the deeper in religious and moral degradation.

III. HE SEEKS A WRONG AND INADEQUATE CHANGE.

The change which the natural man seeks is a change only in the *outer* circumstances of existence, not in the *inner life*. To change the external conditions of life, to compel others to serve him, is a substantial gain for which he would pay almost any price. The changes after which he craves can at best only affect the outer life; but can do nothing for the relief of the inner malady. They are insufficient to secure permanent well-being: nay, when sought as the *chief* object of life, are subversive of it. He is, and ever has been, in fact, ignorant of the *nature*

of the change he needs. It is an inner revolutionary change, wrought in the conscious depths of the individual spirit. No man can accomplish it for himself. Thus, endeavours to improve the moral condition, based on ignorance, only make it worse. This was fully exemplified in the experience of the old world.

IV. HIS IGNORANCE OF THE TRUE REMEDY IS THE RESULT OF SIN.

This ignorance of mankind is the inevitable penalty of transgression of God's law, of violation of the necessary conditions of well-being. Sin is an opposing, darkening, alienating operation in the heart, both in relation to God and to the conditions of the sinner's well-being. Sin separates the sinner from the source of well-being, light, and life, and plunges him in ignorance and error. It awakes a sense of unworthiness, a conflict of nature, a dread of calamity. This is the disordered existence from which the sinner would fain escape. To rid himself of it he toils with energy, but in vain. Why this eternal disquietude and restlessness? It does not spring from man's being created an imperfect being. Reason approves of all that is natural, and especially of the highest order of the natural; else man is produced, is doomed, to

continue in a state of imperfection, and all efforts after perfection are foolish and vain. That uneasiness of conscience which every man in a greater or lesser degree experiences, the distrust of God, aversion of heart to pure religion, the shrinking from the Divine presence, and dread of futurity—all attest that man is *not* in his true and original state.

V. THERE IS A UNIVERSAL CONSCIOUSNESS OF THIS FACT.

The conviction is universal that there is *something* radically wrong. The history of the race in all periods and circumstances is but the record of the search and struggle after an improved existence. We are unhappy, and would be blessed; suffering, and would be joyous; restless and discontented, and would be at ease. We are unsatisfied in the enjoyment of all the world can give us. Unregenerate humanity at all periods has confessed this, and striven to escape from it.

VI. THE CAUSE OF FAILURE IS THAT MAN JUSTIFIES RATHER THAN FORSAKES SELF.

The failure in these endeavours to better the condition of human life has arisen because man has not striven to forsake, but to justify and

vindicate, the desires of his selfish heart. Even if he had sought such escape, he would still be ignorant of the way, and helpless in the endeavour. Instead of seeking first a change *within*, he has been desirous of only an *external* improvement. The result of his most earnest endeavours has proved that he has been pursuing shadows and winning disappointment. He has only the more darkened his mind, corrupted his heart, burdened his spirit. Nor could the case be otherwise. Political progress only benefits the physical condition of men ; philosophical speculations only whets, without satisfying, the intellectual powers ; even religious efforts, if not Christian, only pervert and degrade the life. They do not raise it into fellowship with the Divine. If there is to be large and permanent improvement in the outer life, there must first be a radical change in the inner life.

VII. EXTERNAL PROSPERITY WITHOUT MORAL
IMPROVEMENT IS A CURSE RATHER THAN
A BLESSING.

If history teaches any lesson, it teaches that granting to unregenerate man the fulness of his desires only morally degrades him. Prosperity in the outer life, without the grace of God in the heart, is a curse to the possessor.

VIII. RELIGIOUS RITES AND SACRIFICES ARE
INEFFECTUAL.

Religious sacrifices and supplications designed to alter the disposition of God merely prove that man has no adequate idea of the nature of the change required in his being. To commend himself to heaven, man has inflicted severe penances on himself, starved his body and wounded his flesh, arrayed himself in grotesque and hideous forms, as if the distortions and pangs of God's noblest material work could be agreeable to His benignity, or make the sinful nature acceptable to His fatherly affection ! As if it *could* be honouring to the Creator or dutiful in the creature by any means to draw the all-wise God into compliance with sin ! What has man not done, not striven to do, so that he might make God pliant to his selfishness ! The unregenerate man never looks to regeneration for spiritual deliverance, nor to fellowship with God in the enjoyment of spiritual life as the consummation of blessedness. He dreads such a life, and regards every endeavour to draw him into it as an attempt to rob him of the only happiness he covets. He strives to escape from the burden of evil, not by means of a change in himself but through a change in God ; a change, not in the

Divine manifestation, but in the dispositions and ways of the Almighty.

IX. FOR GOD CANNOT CHANGE.

He does not perceive that the desire to effect such a change in the Infinitely Wise and Eternally Good is not alone the height of folly, but a crowning act of impious blasphemy and selfishness. It is the highest insult that can be offered to God, the greatest sin that can be committed against the sinner himself. The *self-conceited* ascetic, the self-righteous man, labouring with his incessant prayers and supplications, his fastings, his penances, and sacrifices, hopes to induce God to comply with his desires ; but he does not know that human well-being does not consist in the will of God being brought into compliance with human desires, but in these being raised into accordance with the will of God.

X. THIS IS SHOWN IN THE STATE OF THE WORLD AT CHRIST'S COMING.

The state of the world at the coming of Christ clearly shows all this. After centuries of effort to acquire empire, discover truth, attain to greatness, become religious, secure happiness, what was that condition ? The framework of society

was fast breaking up, the nations were sunk in spiritual lethargy ; the human mind was spell-bound in delusion, scepticism, and superstition. The few virtuous in any country were giving way to despair, although desirous of change and anxious for an improved condition of life. No man, however gifted with genius, enlightened in science, devout in his special superstition, had the least conception of where the great change for humanity was needed, or by what means it was to be accomplished.

XI. CHRISTIANITY SHOWED THE TRUE METHOD OF MORAL REFORM.

Christianity comes telling men that permanent improvement in the outer life must be the result of change in the inner life ; that for the realisation of this change no change in God is needed ; that there never was, and never can be, any need of change in the immutable Jehovah ; that the true change must be in the *manifestation* of the Divine; and that this changed manifestation is shown in the mission and work of God's own Son. It further tells them that the change required in themselves is thorough regeneration and repentance, and can only be wrought by the Holy Spirit, through belief in this newest manifestation of the Divine. This regeneration is

the passing from a state of darkness, bondage, helplessness, into a condition of light, liberty, and power. It is realised in ceasing to resist, and in yielding to, the action of the Spirit of God in the soul. Repentance is not merely a reformation of the outer life, nor a change in the religious opinions, nor sorrow for sin, but a change in the attitude of the spirit before God, in the disposition of the heart, in the conceptions of the mind, in the objects and principles of life. The soul shall no longer stand in rebellious opposition to God, but, in conscious destitution, meekly and gratefully accept the Divine gift of salvation.

XII. FAITH IN CHRIST IS THE SOLE MEDIUM OF OBTAINING IT.

The faith, moreover, demanded is not simply belief in God, or in nature, or in humanity, but in CHRIST. It requires of the believer that he shall live in the habitual contemplation of the Divine manifestations in Christ, specially in His death. "With open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord," he is to be "changed into the same image by the Spirit of the Lord." It requires, through the abiding persuasion, that "the weapons" of the Christian's "warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the

pulling down of strongholds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." It requires that he shall live to the glory of God in the loveliness of a truly Christian life.

XIII. THE INNER CHANGE INCLUDES ALL ITS CONDITIONS.

The regeneration, repentance, and faith required are not distinct and separate things, but only various modes of realising the same inner change. And the change is not alone different from, but is the very reverse of, that which man desires of himself to secure. It is the very change needed by all men, in order to the attainment of peace and of fellowship with God. Such a change is approved by reason, and experience shows to be the only one adequate to all the necessities of human well-being for time and eternity.

XIV. SUMMARY OF THE ARGUMENT.

If man in every country and age has felt the need of a great change, has eagerly longed for and sought after it, has put forth every possible effort to secure it, and if all the while he has

been ignorant of the true nature, false in his conceptions of the change he required, and of how it was to be obtained ; if Christianity has come to him demanding of him such a change, revealing to him its true nature and sphere of operation ; if the nature and sphere of the change be the very opposite of what man desired, or was prepared to accept ; if, when he is induced to undergo it, it is found to be the very change he requires for his permanent well-being, and that which Reason herself declares to be above all others adapted to his nature and circumstances, adequate to all the necessities of his well-being for time and eternity—is it not proved clearly to the common sense of every man that the system which makes known this change, and provides the means of it, is not and cannot be of man ?

CHAPTER IV.

CHRISTIANITY ALSO SUPPLIES THE POWER TO EFFECT THE CHANGE.

I. MAN COVETING POWER, NEVER COULD OBTAIN THE POWER OF SELF-DELIVERANCE.

POWER is a possession eagerly coveted by men in all spheres and conditions. And in all its phases it is an object of *legitimate* desire, especially the power which can rescue from evil. Of a power of deliverance from evil, men have ever felt the need, and have been eager in their endeavours to discover and apply it, but they have never been able to form a true conception of its nature, or how it was to accomplish in them the moral change they so much required.

II. THAT POWER WAS GOD'S SELF-SACRIFICE.

It was a power that could only disclose itself in a forthcoming of the Divine in self-sacrifice ; it could be received only in the faith of the self-sacrificing love of God, and could only be enjoyed

by the soul in a conscious indwelling of the Divine Spirit.

The world, in its wisdom, did not perceive what is obviously a first principle of reason and a fact of universal experience ; namely, that the power of deliverance is not and cannot be from the subject in which it operates, but must proceed from a source external to himself. In order to act aright, we must first be made aright. The actions of a life must be in accord with the nature of that life. To attain to a state of pure and perfect enjoyment, a man must be in harmony with the true principles of his being, the genuine sources of his joy. "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth evil things." The sick must have medicine, the suffering must have relief, the fallen must have aid provided for them. If evil is to be eradicated, the root must first be reached. If a community is to be rendered safe from contagion, the diseases of individuals must be cured.

III. BUT MAN MUST CO-OPERATE WITH GOD.

For the realisation of deliverance, there must not alone be a power and an agent to apply it, but also, on the part of those to be delivered, a

co-operation with the agent. In the sick the principle of vitality must co-operate with the qualities of the medicine administered. Life, to be preserved and invigorated, must not only receive, but digest and assimilate, the proper food.

IV. POWER IS THE RESULT OF HARMONIOUS COMBINATION.

Weakness and suffering are the result of defective combination, of ignorance and antagonism. If a combination of chemical elements acts in discord, the chemical force is lost. If a machine be either defective in the quality of the substance of which it is framed, or disjointed, it breaks down. If the constitution be diseased, weakness and suffering follow. If the conscience be burdened with the sense of sin, if the heart be averse to God, the will disinclined to obey His laws, the soul distracted with internal conflict, the life of the man is weak and miserable. Power arises from harmony. There is no power in mere substance. Power lies in the harmonious operation of sufficient and properly-combined elements. The perfection of mechanism, soundness of health, harmony of relationship, accuracy of knowledge, loyalty of spirit, agreeableness of human fellowship, the harmony of man with

God—these are varied forms of power. If the mechanism of the constitution be imperfect, if the relationships of life be discordant, if physical health be impaired, the conceptions false, the spirit selfish, there is corresponding weakness in the life.

V. A SUPERNATURAL POWER ALONE COULD WORK DELIVERANCE FOR MAN.

Power, in its highest manifestations, lies in the operation of elements combined so as to act in harmony. Destructive force is the operation of elements acting either in discord with themselves or in combination against other powers. In order, then, to the removal of weakness in the human heart, there must be brought to act upon the elements in discord a power that will harmonise the relations, renew the spirit, repair the mechanism, restore the health, correct the conceptions. The power of deliverance must be, in fact, a *supernatural* power, descending into the conflict of human nature and life, and so acting on the elements in conflict as to heal the strife, and to bring them into harmonious co-operation with circumstances and destiny.

VI. AND IT MUST BE A DIVINE POWER.

A change in the spiritual relations of man's being can only be effected by a *Divine* power.

To act on the spiritual being of man a spiritual power is needed ; to act beneficially on the fallen nature in man, the power must be a *gracious* Divine power. Man, though fallen, is the subject of unsatisfied religious instincts and cravings ; he is the subject of conscious wrong-doing, consequently of disquietude and dread. He is the subject of self-separation from God, the sovereign power of his life, and consequently of weakness to meet the conditions of his own permanent well-being.

VII. IT MUST BE A MANIFESTATION OF DIVINE LOVE.

The power that saves him must be a manifestation of the Divine, of Divine love acting in self-sacrifice, so as to banish from the human heart all dread of God, all dislike to the manifestations of the Divine, all elements of discord, all sense of unworthiness. And it must be such a deed of self-sacrifice on the part of the Godhead as will fire the human heart with filial self-consecrating love to God, and with a fellow-love to all mankind.

VIII. BUT MAN DOES NOT COMPREHEND THIS.

Man's worst error has been his seeking for a power to prevail over God, to gratify self, to

enable him to live without God in the world. He has erred in trying to discover the power of deliverance in the operations of nature, or in some alteration in the external circumstances of his life. He does not perceive that the power he needs is one that will speak directly to his dread of God, to his sense of guilt, to the inner conflict of his spirit, to his cravings, sympathies, aspirations, hopes, and desires after immortality. And this is a power of the existence of which he could never have formed a conception. This is shown by all the superstitious, self-righteous, mystic, and rationalistic systems.

IX. HE SEEKS THE POWER ELSEWHERE THAN IN GOD.

The error of all unchristianised religious effort, of all philosophic speculation and philanthropic aim, has been seeking for the elevating power of humanity in some human performance ; in an impersonal power in nature ; in an acquaintance with physical law ; in inquiries after fate ; in the principles of freedom and legislative rights ; in theories of Divine government ; in individual, social, or national reformations, or in political economies. The true power necessary to raise man morally must be a twofold power—the manifestation of Divine self-sacrifice, and *belief* in this

manifestation. And *this* is a manifestation, and mode of laying hold of it, of which man of himself could never have conceived.

X. THE SAVING MANIFESTATION IS GOD'S
SELF-SACRIFICING LOVE.

The saving manifestation of the Divine is not merely a display of love, even of fatherly love, but an exhibition of Divine *self-sacrificing* love to the guilty rebel race of man—of love which has never ceased to hold man in its embrace—never ceased to watch over him—never failed to provide for his wants, to instruct and chasten him. Seeing his misery and knowing his helplessness, it has come down to the lowest depths of his wretchedness, borne his enmity, encountered and overcome his foes, and by so doing has created that TRUTH which, believed by him, slays his enmity, fires his love, allures him in gratitude and admiration to God, reconciles, strengthens, and blesses his mortal life, and directs him in the way of glory and of joy.

XI. IT IS A THREEFOLD MANIFESTATION.

This love is the self-sacrifice of the Father, in giving up the Son of His love; the self-sacrifice of the Son, in coming to suffer and die in the stead of man; the self-sacrifice of the Spirit, in

submitting to resistance, quenching, and grieving, that He may regenerate and sanctify mankind. This deed of Divine self-sacrificing love changes the relation of God to man, and of man to God. In atoning for human transgression, the Son removes the frown from the Father's face, and presents Him to the view of man in all the loving condescension of His grace, so placing man in an altered relation to God. He has now only to believe in this gracious manifestation, and his whole inner feelings and principles, his views, desires, and dispositions towards God, become the reverse of what they formerly were.

XII. THE NATURE OF WHICH MAN COULD NEVER HAVE CONCEIVED.

This is a power beyond all human conception. The thoughts of man respecting God and of the means of their own well-being, have ever run in the very opposite direction. It was hidden from man by the impossibility of selfishness conceiving of Divine self-sacrifice. The ignorant, erring creature is shut out from the unrevealed councils of the Godhead. Transgression awakes within the sinner the sense of wrong-doing, and this sense is a new and disagreeable element in his consciousness, of which he cannot but strive to rid himself. He can only do this by trying to

persuade himself that he could not help transgressing, that he should have been secured against temptation, or at least secured against yielding. And thus the sinner brings himself to suspect, dread, and dislike God. With such feelings it was absolutely impossible for man to conceive of God coming down to him in such a stupendous act of self-sacrifice on his behalf.

XIII. THIS IS THE POWER CHRISTIANITY
BRINGS INTO ACTION.

This is the power which Christianity reveals, brings near to man, plants within him, and so enables him to realise its transforming operation in his soul. And in disclosing this power for the purpose of changing his condition and life, it acts in accordance with the inner nature, the relations, and necessities of man. Like produces like. Love, not threatening, produces love. Self-sacrificing love slays enmity, awakens gratitude and zeal for the glory of Him who displays it in their hearts on whose behalf it is displayed. Truth, not speculation, it is that enlightens the mind. And the all-comprehensive truth of God so enlightens the mind of man as to engage his powers in harmony with the laws of universal well-being. The disclosure of lofty and sublime ends arouses and allures the spirit to the pursuit of the high

calling. The bestowment of high and undeserved favours awakens fervent gratitude in the human soul, and binds it under the deepest sense of obligation.

By revealing the love of God to man, Christianity disarms his prejudice, changes his conceptions of God and of himself, fires his heart with love to God and desire for the well-being of his fellow-men, and animates him with the hope of glory. Thus it discloses the power which changes his relations to God, revolutionises his inner being, harmonises the principles of his life, and unites in the concord of brotherly love all the members of the human race. And the gospel effects this change in man, just as it induces him to yield himself up to, and co-operate with, its manifestation of the Divine.

XIV. SUMMARY OF THE ARGUMENT.

If, then, Christianity comes to all men everywhere, demanding of them a radical change of life, revealing to them the nature of the change required, supplying them with the power necessary to effect it; if man has always felt his need of such a change, longed for and sought after the means of effecting it, but in all his endeavours to acquire these means, has only the more strikingly displayed his ignorance of its true nature

and his inability to discover the power by which it may be wrought ; if, just in the measure he desired the change and laboured for the power of effecting it, he only the farther removed himself from both ; if the power that Christianity brings to his aid be the reverse of that he seeks after, or is inclined to yield to ; if it be a power he never dreamt of, never conceived of, and yet is the very power that meets his deepest wants, is adapted to all the necessities of his case and nature ; and if in the measure in which he yields himself up to it, and co-operates with it, he realises the change Christianity demands of him, and feels in the experience of it reconciliation with God, peace in his own nature, and a new power in his life—must it not be clear to demonstration that Christianity is not of man, but of God ?

CHAPTER V.

CHRISTIANITY TRANSFORMS.

I. MAN IS SELFISH.

MAN fallen is a selfish being. He is ensphered in self, engrossed with self, active only about self; self-gratification, self-aggrandisement is the one object of his life. This is the inevitable penalty of transgression of the will of God, the true law of human well-being.

II. AND YIELDS TO TEMPTATION.

The possession of free agency, or of liability to temptation, necessarily involves the possibility of a fall—the removal of the life from the enjoyment of fellowship with God. The act of transgression establishes this removal. As temptation influences us, we become conscious of a wavering of desire between self and God. And as we encourage temptation, we become aware of a decrease of affection to God—of an enfeebling of the sense of duty and of the resolution to abide

only by God and right. We likewise become conscious of an increasing desire after the thing forbidden, drawing us to it so that we resolve to put forth an act of will to secure it. In thus yielding to temptation, there is a fall from the supreme love of and delight in God—from fellowship with the Father of spirits in the conscious rectitude of right into a sense of wrong, an apprehension of wrath, a consciousness of unrest.

III. THEN FOLLOWS A SENSE OF UNREST.

This unrest is a new and painful element in the inner life. From the consciousness of it a man *must* strive to rid himself, and he can only partially do this by an effort of self-vindication. Dreading God, the sinner must strive to shun him. But, separated from God, man cannot be at ease. He cannot rest in the consciousness of disobedience, nor delight in a feeling of inner conflict, any more than the parched lips can be satisfied with the absence of water, or the banished patriot delight in exile, or the fevered frame rejoice in the burnings of disease.

IV. THE UNEASY CONSCIENCE SEEKS RELIEF.

The burdened conscience must struggle to ease itself. The nature constituted for enjoyment in fellowship with God must long for the sense

of His approbation. The spirit brought into existence by an outgoing of the Divine, and formed for filial delight in the Father of spirits, cannot but "cry out for the living God." But a burdened conscience feels the presence of the Holy One to be intolerable, and at all hazards to be got rid of. Hence arises the eagerness to find peace in superstitious observances, and gratification in self-indulgence. As the eye, created for the enjoyment of light, when in a state of disease dreads its approach, so the soul, formed for blessedness in the enjoyment of God, and conscious of a longing after Him, dreads His presence and struggles to fly from His frown.

V. BUT IN VAIN.

From this struggle man cannot of himself find any escape. He can no more calm the tumult of his soul than the raging winds can still the troubled ocean. He can no more arrest the operation of the disturbed principles of his being than the culprit can stay the execution of his sentence, silence the witnesses testifying against him, corrupt the impartial jury, or bribe the just judge. Divine justice, acting in the spiritual life of men, is far more unerring in rewarding or punishing than the most vigilant of human governments. The functionaries of

human law fail, or may be bribed, but not so the powers and agencies of the Divine administration. The powers of the spiritual nature are essentially active, and the Divine power never remits in its operation. The vengeance of Heaven is the suffering realised by the disordered nature, and ere it can be appeased there must be a manifestation of the Divine power to re-adjust the elements in conflict within the human soul.

VI. FAITH WORKS PEACE.

By faith in the Son of God the sinner is brought from self-seeking to self-loathing, from self-commending to self-condemning, from self-glorying to self-denying, from trusting in self to relying upon God. By the power of the cross he is lifted from self to God. In the light that streams from Calvary he sees that self-seeking leads to tampering with temptation, to violation of the laws of life—the inseparable conditions of well-being — to resisting God in His gracious purpose to secure peace and glory for the sinner Himself. Faith lifts the sinner out of the darkness of error into the light of truth—out of the bondage of self into the liberty of the sons of God.

VII. THE CROSS REVEALS THE TRUTH.

In the light of Calvary the penitent believer perceives that the effort to justify himself, to

merit by his own doings the favour of Heaven has blinded him to a perception of his real state, and led him to crucify the Son and resist the Spirit. He sees that in clinging to self-righteousness he has disregarded the invitations, scorned the salvation, of Christ. He passes at once from self-commendation to self-condemnation. He perceives, moreover, that self-glorying is unreasonable in the sight of Heaven, the most heinous iniquity possible to a created intelligence. It is a state of thought and feeling which leads him to justify his sin, reject the Saviour, and give defiance even to God's mercy. He now sees that self-sacrifice is the very highest act of the Godhead itself—the most powerful display of Omnipotent grace—that work of God which issues in the most blessed of all results. He repudiates all self-glorying, delights in self-denial, glories in God through Christ, and exclaims from the innermost depths of his heart, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

The cross exhibits conspicuously the sinfulness of selfishness crucifying the Lord of glory Himself, the wickedness of self-vindication rejecting salvation ; and at the same time illustriously

displays the love and grace of God quickening the spirit of man with the Divine life, and awakening the sinner to repentance and faith. This it is that binds the believer in bonds of everlasting gratitude to God his Saviour. He now hates self, and rejoices in the self-sacrificing One alone. He rejoices "with joy unspeakable" in the re-assimilations of his soul into the image of God.

VIII. THE RESTORED SOUL SEEKS GOD, AND FINDS HIM.

The heart of the believer, rising on the wings of faith to the Father in heaven, God, in ever fuller and clearer manifestations, reveals Himself to the soul. The emotions become calmer and sweeter, the affections are expanded, the gratitude is deepened with holier resolve. He now intensely feels what it is to be in the presence of God. In those hallowed moments he beholds with rapture the beatific glories of sovereign grace, and feels himself strengthened for trial, for duty, for even death. Christianity, by thus lifting men out of conflict into peaceful blessedness, out of the false into the true, out of self into God, out of the carnal into the spiritual, out of self-seeking into self-sacrificing, out of disturbed into readjusted relations of being, out of

darkness into light, out of emnity into love, out of fellowship with the world into communion with the Father, fills all the susceptibilities of the soul, all the faculties of the mind, all the energies of the will, with a new and Divine life. God is all in all to the renewed spirit. God dwells in the believer, and the believer in Him.

IX. SUMMARY OF THE ARGUMENT.

If, then, Christianity comes to men demanding in them a change of which man of himself is altogether ignorant—to which, in so far as he comprehends its nature, he is strongly opposed ; for the effecting of which he knows not the manner, and is destitute of the power ; if, moreover, Christianity clearly reveals all this, and gives at the same time the power necessary for its accomplishment ; if in the measure in which it accomplishes the change it lifts him out of conflict into peace, out of error into truth, out of self into God—who that has once realised its Divine power will doubt whether it be of God ? It is an affront to common sense, an insult to reason, to maintain, in view of such facts, that Christianity is of human origin. As surely as the light of day evidences the shining of the sun, so surely is the nature of the change wrought by Christianity proof conclusive that it is not of man but of God.

CHAPTER VI.

THE INSTRUMENTALITY PROVES THE DIVINE ORIGIN.

I. AN UNCHRISTIANISED MAN VIEWS CHRIS- TIANITY IN A FALSE LIGHT.

THE medium through which we contemplate any object determines the view we take of it. If the medium presents it to us in a partial or false light, we cannot receive a correct view, only a distorted and wrong one. This is the inevitable condition of all human investigation. The unregenerate man, by the fact of his depravity, is necessitated to view Christianity through the perverting medium of sin, or of his individual bias of disposition. He therefore sees it in a false light. Herein lies the insuperable difficulty of his coming to a right conception of the truth and power of the gospel. A licentious man looks at the purity of Christianity though the medium of his licentiousness; a covetous man contemplates the self-denial it requires through his own

covetousness ; a proud and ambitious man views its meekness and gentleness through his own pride and ambition ; the revengeful man sees its forbearing and forgiving spirit through the medium of his own evil disposition ; the self-righteous man dwells in thought on justification by faith as it appears to his own conception ; the speculative and sceptical judge of its supernatural truth by the light of their own incredulity. Thus have men ever viewed Christianity in a false and, to them, repulsive light. They have not only reviled the change it demands, but repudiated it with scorn. Its advance has ever been made in the face of formidable opposition.

II. BUT CHRISTIANITY NEVER ALTERS.

But Christianity never alters, either in the doctrines it proclaims or in the demands it makes ; although well knowing that its purity would rouse the opposition of the sensual, its self-denial provoke the resistance of the covetous, its meekness and gentleness call forth the antagonism of the proud, its forbearance kindle the ire of the revengeful, its precept of justification by faith draw forth the scorn of the self-righteous, and the simplicity of its truth excite the contempt of the sceptical and unbelieving. And, in the consciousness of its own Divine excellence,

looks calmly on all opposition, and by meekness, patience, and long-suffering resolves to overcome it.

III. NATURAL RELIGION KNOWS NOTHING OF A CHANGE OF HEART IN MAN.

What is called natural religion, on the contrary, gives no evidence of any desire or effort to change the human heart through a change in the manifestation of the Divine Creator. All we learn from it is that man is eager to effect a change in the disposition of God towards himself. But never has man by his own inquiries discovered the *cause* of his distance from God. Natural religion, in fact, leaves him equally in ignorance of God and of himself.

IV. CHRISTIANITY SUPPLIES THE FAILURE OF NATURAL RELIGION.

Now, these are the very truths which Christianity reveals. It shows men that they are wholly in error in their spiritual conceptions, desires, and aims ; that they need no change in the *disposition* of God, but only in His *manifestation* to them ; that the change they need is purely spiritual. It goes further, and exhibits them in most attractive loveliness, the perfect example of the life that God requires of them ; and at the

same time discloses the grace which is able to draw them into the imitation of that perfect example.

V. SUMMARY OF THE ARGUMENT.

Christianity demands of each individual that change which is most difficult for him to undergo. It tells the licentious that he must become pure as God is pure ; the intemperate, that he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven without holiness ; the covetous, that he is an idolater, and, if he would be saved, must seek the imperishable riches ; the ambitious, that he must aim only at winning an eternal crown ; the proud, that he is far from God, and must become meek and lowly ; the revengeful, that he must become merciful and forgiving ; the self-righteous, that he must learn self-renunciation ; the sceptical, that he is banishing himself from the knowledge of God, and enshrouding himself in intellectual darkness, and must in meekness receive Him by faith. And not alone does it demand this deep and penetrating change, but the change is to be effected by yielding up exactly what is most cherished by the individual, and therefore the most difficult to part with. Such a change no man of himself would ever desire and aim after. The system which demands it is therefore not a human

system. It comes to all men everywhere, demanding of them this great spiritual change, revealing the nature of it, supplying the power necessary to effect it, raises them by means of it out of conflict into peace, out of error into truth, out of self into God; and it does this in a manner, and by an instrumentality, absolutely repulsive to the human heart. Have we not here a clear demonstration that it must be of God?

CHAPTER VII.

SUMMARY OF THE ARGUMENT OF BOOK THIRD.

I.

WE have seen that man, everywhere and in all ages, has felt his need of a spiritual change, but has never had any right conception of its character, still less of the power necessary to effect it. The only spiritual change he has ever conceived of is in the disposition of God towards himself, to be won through sacrifices, penances, and supplications. The only change, in fine, ever imagined or desired by him is an improvement in the conditions of his individual, social, or national life.

II.

But the real change needed lies in man's relations to God, in the principles and motives of his living, a change from a rebellious to a filial life, from the love of self to the supreme love of God. This is precisely the change Christianity

reveals and demands and supplies the power of effecting.

III.

Again : men in all ages have eagerly sought after power, especially the power of improving their own circumstances. But they never dreamed of that power which Christianity bestows. It was, in fact, impossible that they *could* form any conception of it. And yet it is the only power that fully meets all the spiritual wants of mankind. Just in the measure that any man believes in Christ, and yields his heart to the quickening power of His Divine Spirit, does he realise "grace reigning through righteousness unto eternal life." He feels himself raised out of self into God. Conflict of nature becomes harmony of life, error becomes truth. He feels the beginning of an immortal life, and a blessed sense of delight in the consciousness that it is exactly that which his nature requires, and the earnest of everlasting peace and joy.

IV.

The force that draws one body out of its orbit into nearness with another body is an attractive force residing in the latter. This law universally prevails. The higher attracts the lower. The

sun attracts the earth, and holds it in its orbit. The instructed mind educates the untutored mind. A powerful spirit dominates a weaker one. The power that attracts and binds man to God in bonds of the Divine life can only proceed from God.

V.

What, then, is the only explanation possible of the existence, nature, and operation of Christianity in the world? Is it that the system is the device of a crafty priesthood, the invention of cunning politicians, the offspring of blind superstition, an idol begotten of the idolatrous heart, or a jumble of incoherent myths? No! the only explanation of all this is that Christ's revelation, like the person of its Divine Author, comes to humanity directly from the bosom of the Infinite God Himself.

BOOK FOURTH.

CHRIST'S DYING SUPERHUMAN.

CHAPTER I.

I. SELFISHNESS IS THE UNIVERSAL MALADY.

THE obstacles to man's physical and moral well-being are numerous and formidable. The study of nature, the application of science to art, the cultivation of letters, the progress of philosophy, refinement of taste, medical skill, have each and all accomplished much for human amelioration. But the deep-seated evil of selfishness still remains unconquered. It yields to no finite power. It cannot be eradicated by anything short of self-sacrifice on the part of God Himself.

II. REBELLION AGAINST GOD CANNOT BE OVERCOME BY THE MERE EXERCISE OF POWER.

Spiritual antagonism is the worst form of opposition. Fortified by false conceptions of self-interest, it is the most obstinate of all obstacles. The rebel is the most inveterate of foes. He always takes the worst view of the purposes and dispositions of his sovereign.

The sovereign may, by his superior power, restrain the rebel from disturbing his government, but such an exercise of power will never change his enmity into loyal obedience ; it but the more exasperates his hatred. He can only be won to loyalty by an act of grace, pardoning him, and securing to him future opportunities of honourable service. If the sovereign should condescend, by some signal act of self-sacrifice on the rebel's behalf, to convince him that his government is really benign and just, maintained solely for the welfare of the subjects ; if, allowing the rebel full scope to display his enmity to his own person, he should prove to him that whilst he was endeavouring to overthrow the government, his sovereign, on his part, was working to secure the costliest benefits for him—nay, was taking occasion from his very rebellion to bestow the most precious favours—surely this would overcome his enmity and convert him into a loyal and dutiful subject.

III. HOW CAN REBELLION BE OVERCOME ?

Every intelligent being in the universe must be either loyal or rebellious. The rebellious spirit must be in a state either of confirmed rebellion or of possible recovery. Experience proves that, not simple ignorance, but the enmity

of man towards God, is the grand obstacle to human happiness and well-being. How this enmity is to be overcome is the primary consideration in the recovery of man from his fallen condition.

IV. IT CAN ONLY BE THROUGH AN EXHIBITION OF LOVE AND MERCY.

It can be so overcome solely through such an exhibition of God's love and grace as will prove it to be alike groundless in God and ruinous to man himself. There must be a manifestation of God's self-sacrificing love on man's behalf. Nothing short of visible proof of the compassionate love of God will slay the enmity of the human heart and inspire it with confidence in Him. So deeply evil are the sins, the dark suspicions of the human heart, that only the sacrifice of incarnate Divinity, voluntarily undergone, and by the hands of men, could subdue its enmity, transform the human spirit, win back the rebellious to loyal and loving devotedness.

V. SALVATION MUST BE OF GRACE.

If, then, man is to be saved, his salvation must be of grace, for grace is a display of self-sacrifice. It is love sacrificing itself on behalf of the unworthy, so that it may make their very rebel-

lion the means of conferring on them its most precious favours. The revelation of grace in the gospel is a doctrine blankly opposed to the natural conceptions and antagonistic to the religious ideas of mankind. The design of salvation could have originated only with God, the infinitely gracious. The power of salvation could only have been created by God, condescending to man, and suffering for him. The conviction of its need could have been lodged in the human heart only by God pitying and striving as the gracious God. The Divine life could only have been developed in the soul by God, loving and long-suffering, condescending to dwell in the renewed heart. Salvation—the restoration of sinners to favour and fellowship with God ; the elevation of apostates to the honours and felicities of heaven ; the recovery of lost spirits to immortal life by means of the incarnation, life, death, and ascension of God's own Son ; the ascent of rebel man through the descent of the Creator Himself : it is a wondrous conception, and amazing design.

VI. SUCH A CONCEPTION MUST COME FROM GOD HIMSELF.

With whom could the conception have originated except with the perfection of benevolence,

the Eternal Source of beneficence and fount of blessedness? It is a conception too vast, too glorious to be originated with less than Infinite Everlasting Love. It involves such perfections, evolves such principles, manifests such a purpose, secures such results, as render it absolutely impossible that it could ever have originated in any created mind. The pervading element, reigning principle, prevailing power of salvation by grace is LOVE, amazing, unbounded, self-sacrificing. So amazing is it that it apparently contradicts itself; for it is love the most tender, intense, immutable, parting with the very object of its affection, its infinite and eternal delight, for the benefit of those it condemns. It is benevolence exerting itself in the most wondrous form of self-sacrificing devotedness, in return for opposition, ingratitude, hate. It is generosity acknowledging no limits to its self-denial, no bounds to its self-sacrifice. The rebel is quickened with love to his Divine Sovereign by the operation of the Eternal Spirit, through the life and death of the only Son. Could the conception of such a salvation have originated with fallen man himself?

CHAPTER II.

THE POWER OF SALVATION.

I. THE POWER OF SALVATION MUST BE OF GOD.

LIKE produces like. The effect contains in it only what may be found in the cause. The actions of any individual exhibit just what his mind thinks and his heart desires. The power of human salvation could only have been created by God Himself, and by God suffering as the gracious God. The rebellious principle is the most terrible power in human consciousness. For the overthrow of it the utmost manifestation and unremitting energy of the Godhead are necessary. And it is an unaccountable perversion of human personality, so that it cannot be overcome by anything less than a stupendous act of self-sacrifice on the part of the Godhead, manifesting the consummate wisdom of the Father.

II. AND IT IS HIS GREATEST WORK.

God acts wisely in all that He does, especially in foiling the powers of darkness, slaying the rebellious disposition of the human heart, and filling it with love and gratitude towards Himself. The recovery of humanity to conscious fellowship with its Father in heaven is the greatest work of God. This is the work by which He displays to principalities and powers in heavenly places His manifold wisdom. In extinguishing the rebellion of His fair dominion, in raising the rebellious into fellowship with His own Son, gloriously reigning over all, He draws forth the adoring admiration of all holy intelligences.

III. THE HIGHEST EXHIBITION OF HIS WISDOM.

Wisdom, understanding, knowledge, are all acts of the same mind, but they are separate mental acts. Knowledge is the possession of ideas, or acquaintance with facts. Understanding is the perception of the relations in which ideas or facts stand to each other. Wisdom is the right use of knowledge, the proper employment of understanding, for the accomplishment of some high or noble end. In the display of a high degree of wisdom there is, first, the selec-

tion of a proper object of pursuit; and secondly, the accomplishing of it by the means best fitted to secure it. The best means must be employed in the most efficient manner. Wisdom in the Creator is essentially the same as wisdom in the creature. God, in order to the display of a perfect act of His wisdom, not only chooses an end worthy of His infinite being, but also selects the means best fitted to accomplish that end, and employs these in the best possible manner.

IV. AND HIS SUPREME END.

Now, the end that God has chosen to display most worthily the highest perfection of His wisdom—which is of the highest importance to His creation, and surpasses in its grandeur all His other works—is man's salvation. In the accomplishment of this great purpose He acts in the view of two different orders of intelligences—the fallen and the unfallen. And in acting on the fallen in the view of the unfallen, He so displays His wisdom that it appears perfect and infinite wisdom to both.

V. DISPLAYED TO SUPERIOR INTELLIGENCES.

Thus the announcement of mercy to man is the proclamation of “the glorious gospel of the

blessed God." The angels announcing the birth of the Saviour proclaimed, "Glory to God in the highest!" St. Paul, in the expression of his adoring contemplation of God's work of grace, exclaims, "O the depths of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ; how unsearchable are his designs, and his ways are past finding out." And again, speaking of the same grace, "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory." To give the highest manifestation of His infinite perfections to finite intelligence, God has set His heart upon collecting into one society the redeemed of mankind, that they may live for ever in the highest state of blessedness, in the enjoyment of fellowship with Himself. This is St. Paul's statement: "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." Observe here the force of the particle "now." God had given, in the various orders of creation, manifold displays of His wisdom ; but over and above these He now gives to the intelligences of heaven a new and surpassing manifestation of His infinite wisdom. In the redemption of man, in the formation of the Church, in the reign of grace

in His kingdom, God exhibits to heavenly intelligences the final perfection of His Being and action. He shows His absolute knowledge of all substances, natures, relations, powers, and principles of being ; of how these can be influenced by His grace, in accordance with their several capacities and functions ; and manifests His wondrous condescension in so acting upon them as to secure the salvation of mankind.

VI. GOD CREATES THE SAVING POWER.

In securing that salvation He acts in entire harmony with the nature of things, the constitution of man, the principles of His own Being, and the perfection of His Divine character. To save man, it was needful for God not simply to cherish the desire, to devise the purpose, but to *create* the saving power. The desire to save, even on the part of God, does not suffice. If it could suffice, all men would have been saved, for "God willeth not the death of the sinner." He desires that sinners should turn from the error of their ways and live. The salvation of man is a WORK in man, wrought by God through the means of a manifestation and an influence. Individual salvation is "God working in man to will and to do of his good pleasure."

VII. BUT MAN IS FREE AND A REBEL.

Man is a rational being, a free agent, but in a condition of rebellion against God, and the necessary result of this condition is an aversion to authority. "The carnal mind is enmity toward God; it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." But whilst in a state of enmity to God, man continues all the more steadfast in his love for self. He *must* love, and in ceasing to love the proper object of his affection he enthrones self in his heart. Hence it is that he is afar off from God. "The language of his heart is, Depart from me, for I desire not the knowledge of thy ways." No marvel, then, that he views self, and all connected with it, in the most alluring light, but looks with suspicion on the character of God and His doings. What men love they delight in; what they hate they look upon with distrust.

CHAPTER III.

THE GREAT CHANGE.

I. A TWOFOLD CHANGE IS NEEDED.

THE change necessary to salvation is two-fold. It is a conversion from the supreme love of self to the supreme love of God. This change must be effected in perfect harmony with the nature and obligations of man. How was it possible of accomplishment? If effected at all it must be accomplished in harmony with man's free agency, and in a manner that would perfect his free agency. Now, this freedom is God's highest work in creation, the master-stroke of Divine wisdom and power.

II. BUT IT MUST BE IN HARMONY WITH MAN'S MORAL CONSTITUTION.

The change must do no violence to this highest and most delicate principle of human nature. There must be no slight nor neglect of it, but rather a full appreciation of all its

requirements. The rational nature, acting on principles of responsibility, is the very image of God in man, the most illustrious display of the Divine creative energy.

If, in perfecting the free agency of man, violence were done to the principle itself, the end contemplated would be lost. It is not the fact of acting, but the *modes* of action that display the personality of the individual. It is not the *constitution*, but the *consciousness* in man that needs salvation. If, then, in effecting a change in the character of the individual consciousness, any violence be done to the principle of free agency, the change itself will not be the perfecting of the moral nature. It would be not to save but to destroy the man. A different human being would, so to speak, be formed out of the substance and humanity of another. Where, in such a transformation, would there be room for the wisdom and power of the all-perfect Creator and Redeemer?

III. IT IS A CHANGE IN THE CONSCIOUSNESS WITHIN THE CONSTITUTION.

But how could this saving change in human consciousness be wrought without doing violence to man's constitution? How could God perfect the personality by emancipating the free agency?

To produce hatred towards what is hateful, we must show its hideous qualities. To awaken love towards what is lovely, we must exhibit its loveliness. To convince of the necessity of acting in *this* rather than in *that* way, we must set forth the results of these separate methods of action. Man fell from God in the full and unfettered exercise of his free agency. By voluntarily yielding to temptation, he violated the conditions of his well-being, and wrought in himself a change from a state of holiness and happiness to a condition of sinfulness and misery. Supreme love to God was extinguished. The clear light of truth was lost, the consciousness of rectitude, the harmony of being ; and in their place came the consciousness of wrong-doing, conflict of nature, darkness of mind, dread of God, dislike of His authority, the unavailing struggle to regain the higher and better state of being. In salvation there is experienced the reversion of all this. The man passes out of his state of self-conflict into one of harmonious relation with God and with himself. And he passes through the change, not alone in the full exercise of his free agency, but in a manner that perfects it. A change of this kind could never have been accomplished by the fiat of authority, by force, or severity, or indulgence ;

there was needful an instrumentality that in its very nature was fitted to effect such a change in a rational being, in accordance with his nature and circumstances. How was rebellion to be extinguished, and loyalty awakened, in the sinful heart? How may the disobedient be made to feel their guilt, and to tremble under the apprehension of its consequences, to cry for mercy, receive forgiveness, and in the consciousness of it rejoice? How may aversion to God and His authority be changed into loving confidence and devotedness? The capacity of hating is a necessary element in the constitution of a moral agent. But to hate only what is in its nature hateful is the proper exercise of the power. Now, the proper object of hatred for man is selfishness. How is he to be brought to hate his own selfishness? It can only be done by exhibiting before him, in some striking manifestation, its true character and results. But how was *this* possible in working out human salvation? Herein lies the chief difficulty of salvation. Men, in becoming selfish, pervert their inclinations and their judgments regarding God, and regarding their very selfishness. They cannot view either except through the distorted medium of prejudice.

IV. AND A REVOLUTIONARY MORAL CHANGE.

How could the hatefulness and the dire consequences of selfishness be exhibited to them? By affording selfishness its fullest scope to develop itself in man's sinful life, withdrawing from him every restraint, and supplying him with every incentive to selfishness. Could the infinitely holy God so act? Even were this course possible, what would be the result to man himself? Would it not be to make him a still deeper sinner than before, remove him further from God, and make him still more hateful? Instead of raising him to glory and blessedness, would it not plunge him into the very depths of perdition, and harden him to the point of becoming irrevocably lost? Could selfishness be exhibited in its true nature and results in any other manner than by affording to it the fullest scope for evolving these?

The deadly nature of disease is best exhibited by affording it full scope to develop itself in the body. The blinding and fatal nature of error is best manifested by affording it full scope to develop itself in the mind. So the real nature of enmity towards God is most clearly displayed by granting the widest scope for its operation.

V. TO SUBDUE SELF, ITS ULTIMATE EVIL,
EFFECTS MUST BE EXHIBITED.

The true character of selfishness, as affecting man himself, to be clearly shown must be displayed in human nature. But how could its evil operation be exhibited in the sufferings of humanity so as at the same time to enable man to perceive its nature and desire delivery from it? How could man, in the very act of rebellion, be brought to perceive the power of God's love and grace? This was the problem which Divine wisdom solved when God engaged in the work of human salvation. It was a problem that no created wisdom *could* have solved. Human intelligence could never have approached to the faintest conception of the Divine method. The conception was opposed to every idea of God and of himself entertained by man. It could only be approached by his perception of what could *not* save him. Had it been possible for man to obtain a glimpse of the method, he would have pronounced it impossible even to God. So dark has the way of salvation ever been to human conception, that but for the reflected light of Divine revelation, even the conception of the negative of the method would have been unattainable.

Love, as has been said, is awakened by a display of the lovely characteristics of its object. It was only to be awakened in the human heart by displaying in some striking form the loveliness of the Divine character in its love towards man. Was it possible to exhibit God's love to sinful man in such way as would arrest his attention and draw out his love to God? Could God come to the sinner with such a revelation of Himself as would prove to him the groundlessness of his dark suspicions of the Divine character and purposes, and so win him to feel the tenderness of God's love and purpose towards him as to compel him to yield himself up to the embrace of his heavenly Father?

The disease of man's spiritual organ of vision is consciousness of guilt. While he is under its power he cannot perceive the infinite loveliness of God's character—cannot surmount the false conceptions in which that consciousness envelopes him. Nor can he of himself do anything to dispel the mental darkness. His very attempts to seek after God only involve him in deeper gloom. How could God display His infinite loving-kindness towards mankind so as to dispel the darkness of prejudice and overcome the enmity of selfishness? Should He come to the sinner with a superabundance of His gifts, and

with His own hand bestow them? How, in that case, should He approach? Could the sinner endure God's immediate presence? Would he welcome the manifestations of the Infinite Majesty and glory? View the scene at the foot of Sinai. Did the Israelites welcome the manifestations of the Divine presence? Should God lavish still more generously on the sinner those very things upon which his corrupt heart is set, what would be the effect? What *has* been the result of God's prodigality of bounty, of wealth and pleasure, to mankind? Has it lead him to repentance, to love and devotedness to the Giver? Does the gratification of selfishness lessen or destroy its force? Or, again, should God come to man with a superabundance of supernatural gifts, what would have resulted? View the effects of those very gifts in the Corinthian Church? But, granting this point, what kind of supernatural gifts would have been fitting? In what manner could they have been received? How would they have been employed? In fine, how could the infinite love of God be so exhibited to man as to slay the enmity of his rebellious spirit and draw it out in loving confidence towards Him? Here is the underlying principle of human well-being. Until the human soul ceases to dread God and

to resist His approaches it cannot realise peace ; but it can only do this in proportion as it learns to love Him. How was this great change to be wrought in humanity ? In the reflected light of Divine revelation we may see how this could *not* have been accomplished. The presence of the supreme Lawgiver would only arouse in the rebellious more confirmed opposition and open defiance. Showering favours on the unworthy would only render them the more selfish and self-willed. The simple restoration of the authority of the broken law, and the infliction of all its penalties on transgressors, would only the more provoke them to blasphemy. These facts are patent in human history. Suffering for sin has not led men to repentance and brought them back to God. Neither have the manifestations of God's goodness, amid the loveliest scenes of nature, even when endowed with the brightest genius and enriched with the highest culture. Man has still been an idolater.

VI. AND ALSO AN EXHIBITION OF INFINITE LOVE AND MERCY.

What, then, was really needed to bring man back to God in loving gratitude ? Some signal and supernatural manifestation of Divine grace. It was necessary that God should display to

man His fullest and tenderest love through the very manifestations of human hatred and contempt of the Divine. The reclaiming power must be a *supernatural* manifestation. For, if nature in all her forms of loveliness and goodness failed to retain man in allegiance to God, no further display of that loveliness and goodness would avail to slay the enmity of man to God, convince him of his ingratitude, win him to love. The power, again, must be a display of *fatherly* love. Love alone wins love. Only an exhibition of fatherly love will awaken filial love, and it must be a manifestation of *self-sacrificing* fatherly love. Nothing less than this will remove the burden of guilt, slay the enmity of the heart, kindle filial love, draw out admiration and confidence. A display of fatherly, self-sacrificing love on the part of God, then, was the *dread* necessity of human guilt. Consciousness of guilt is the heavy burden of the human spirit, the distorting medium through which it views God, the dark atmosphere in which it breathes; and no manifestation of love, even from God the loving Father, which does not speak directly to this consciousness can bring man permanently into the way of God and of his own eternal well-being.

But more: the display must be such as will

enable man to perceive clearly the way whereby he can escape the consequences of his guilt, and give him boundless opportunity to testify his gratitude, in devotion to God's glory through the promotion of human well-being. It must exhibit the hideous nature and consequences of rebellious selfishness. This twofold manifestation of the evil of sin on the one hand and of the love of God on the other, required to be given in *one* display, given in distinct and impressive conjunctions. The first without the second would have driven man to despair; the second without the first would lead him to presumption.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SELF-SACRIFICING DEATH OF CHRIST.

I. THE WORLD REJECTED CHRIST THROUGH SELFISHNESS.

CHRIST came announcing Himself to be the Son of God, entitled to equal reverence with the Father. And He proved His claim. But did the world receive Him as a messenger from God, and a herald of mercy to mankind? Its response was, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" Now, why was Christ thus strangely and cruelly treated? There is but one explanation; namely, the innate hatred of "carnal" man to the infinite holiness of God, his dread of the light of truth, the enmity of selfishness to the presence and manifestations of the highest self-sacrifice. And why did Christ meekly yield to such treatment, submit to a cruel and ignominious death, while praying for the forgiveness of His very murderer? It was in order that He might give the world a

mirror in which it might see reflected, in the light of its own doings, evidence of the insuperable enmity of "carnal" man to God ; and in the view of it be led to turn from the bondage of selfishness to the Divine freedom of self-sacrifice.

II. CHRIST CAME TO EXHIBIT SELF-SACRIFICE.

It is written that "He, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," was by wicked hands crucified and slain. And he averred that the Father loved Him "because he laid down his life." The Father, indeed, delivered up His well-beloved Son to such a death, and so loved Him, because He died in order that the Godhead might give to the world the final proof—the last possible even for God Himself—of love for the fallen race. The death on Calvary was the ultimate evidence of God's purpose to give, and to perform, for man's salvation, all that was possible, even to the Godhead. Thus we perceive the amazing condescension of the Godhead stooping to *create* the power of human salvation. The Father gave up His Son to death to create the power which should at once show man's true character to himself, and exhibit the wondrous love of God in saving him.

III. THIS IS THE POWER OF GOD UNTO
SALVATION.

This is "the power of God unto salvation." The death of Christ was the creation of a power which teaches man that while he continues under the power of carnality he cannot hold fellowship with God, can only manifest opposition to and defiance of Him. It is the creation of a power which simultaneously displays the infinitely loving purpose and power of the God-head, as fitted to slay the enmity of the carnal heart, and draws it out in filial love and gratitude to the all-loving Father. Thus it is that the death of Christ becomes the twofold manifestation necessary to accomplish the change needed by man for salvation. Father, Son and Spirit each took His part in this amazing transaction. It was the revelation of a purpose kept secret from ages and generations, a purpose of the God-head to leave nothing undone that could, in the nature of things, convince sinners of the true character of sin, bring them to hate it, and to yield themselves freely to the Divine grace that is able to raise them above its malignant power. The manifestation of *such* a purpose was a stupendous display of the eternal and infinite love of the Father's heart to man and desire for his

well-being. What affectionate father would not rather die a thousand deaths than give up an only son to the power of cruel and bitter enemies, and inflict with his own hand the severest pangs of his agonizing death? But this is what the Father *has* done to prove His love and His purpose of mercy to our sinful race. The death of Christ meets all the conditions of the case. The only and well-beloved Son of the Father—the Incarnate Son, commissioned to reveal the Father's love and purpose of mercy to the world—dies by the hands of selfish man. This is that manifestation of the Godhead which, above every other, is fitted to change the rebellious heart, turn it from the worship of self to the love of God, and to change aversion from God into aversion from sin.

IV. CHRIST'S DEATH REVEALS GOD AS INFINITELY LOVING AND MERCIFUL.

In Christ crucified, God comes forth in luminous love from the thick darkness in which sin shrouded Him from the eye of guilt. He comes forth for the subjugation of all the powers and principalities of universal Being in the consecration of the Divine administration to the well-being of humanity. He comes forth with the revelation of such a glorious truth as man will

gladly believe—in the employment of such an influence as man will yield to with delight and honour. If man will only so yield by believing this truth, he becomes changed in his inner life, is reconciled to God and to his own constitutional well-being, is restored to his right place in God's order of universal existence. In a single word, he is SAVED.

V. FAITH IS THE ACCEPTANCE OF THIS
TRUTH.

Belief, then, is the reception of Christ by faith ; and *this* is eternal life. It is impossible that the believer should not be endowed with the gift of eternal life. His faith in Christ makes him one in spirit, mind, and life with God's own Son ; one in soul, intellect, and will with the eternal God. Man was created in the image of God, with the capacity for the Divine indwelling. Believing in Christ, he has in him the hope of glory, and he becomes one with Him “in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” “With open face as in a glass” he “beholds the glory of the Lord,” and is “changed into the same image from glory to glory, even by the Lord, the Spirit.” He “comprehends what is the breadth and length, the depth and height” of that love which is incomprehensible. *He*, too, is

"filled with all the fulness of God." This, then, was the very manifestation needed by man for salvation. It was a manifestation that could not be given otherwise than it *was* given. The incarnation of the Son of God is a supernatural display of God's love to man, infinitely surpassing any that nature affords; a display which proves how dear humanity still is to the heart of the Father. God, so to say, *marries* humanity to His only and well-beloved Son. He is the "Bridegroom." By the incarnation He reveals the Divine capacities and infinite capabilities of humanity. In the *death* of Christ, moreover, God gives the clearest display of the hideous character of human selfishness. We behold incarnate loveliness and beneficence claiming Divine honour and proving itself worthy of them, yet cruelly murdered by human selfishness. The cross manifests Divine love in a manner that speaks directly to man's consciousness of guilt, and to the deepest emotions of the filial heart. For, in the mysterious desertion of the Son by the Father in the very "hour and power of darkness," we behold the Father taking upon *Himself* the consequences of human transgression, and laying upon His beloved Son all the conditions of its forgiveness.

VI. THE CROSS REVEALS THE METHOD OF
MAN'S EMANCIPATION.

The cross reveals how God can emancipate the sinner from the thraldom of evil, overthrowing the powers of darkness, making their very attempts to destroy incarnate devotedness the means of breaking their power. By raising His Son from the dead and setting Him, in human nature, at His own right hand, God sets before faith a view designed and fitted to nerve every energy of redeemed humanity in the pursuit of glory, honour, and immortal life. The view reveals how humanity, in union with Divinity, may grasp all the opportunities afforded by a life of faith in a world of sin, of performing the most glorious deeds that can be achieved in time.

VII. BY SLAYING THE ENMITY.

The scenes of Gethsemane and Calvary prove that the Father, in that most august act of the Godhead, proceeded in the very way best fitted to slay the enmity of the rebel heart ; to verify the hope of the believer that the punishment of his sin is completely removed, being laid on God's own Son ; and all this, not from anger towards the Son, or from disregard for the principles of the Divine law and government, but solely for

the creation of the power of human salvation, and the opening up of the only avenue to lasting fellowship between God and man.

VIII. AND CREATING THE POWER OF MAN'S SALVATION.

The sinner perceiving the reality of his guilt is seized with remorse, and can only free himself from it when he comprehends the way in which his guilt can be removed, and turned into an occasion of glorifying God. The Father, in the dreadful hour of His Son's realisation of His wrath against sin, withdrew from that Son, not in displeasure with Him, or in anger against mankind, but in *the creation of the power of man's salvation*. This is the act of the Godhead which speaks with power to the human spirit. In the withdrawal of the Father's countenance, the Son, substitute for the guilty, realises all the dreadful consequences of sin. To all men is given the true idea of sinfulness ; to the believer is given the clearest evidence that the penalty of all human transgression has been laid on the substitute, so that he may rest in the assurance that his personal sins have been for ever taken away.

IX. THE CROSS IS A TWOFOLD EXHIBITION OF
GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS AND MERCY.

The Eternal Father comes forth in the view of universal intelligence, and solemnly performs the great act of Divine Majesty which at once sustains His own character and displays mercy to sinners ; and that act is the most amazing manifestation of the reality of sin's punishment, in the endurance of its penalty by God's own well-beloved Son. The Father "lays on *him* the iniquities of us all" at the very moment when He regards the Son with the fullest complacency of the Godhead. It was an act of the Godhead pre-eminently fitted to answer all the ends of Divine grace. It would impress the angelic hosts, carry comfort and consolation to the believer, convince the sinner that there is no other way of escape from sin and its consequences, and make known even to the powers of hell the depth to which God *could* condescend in condemnation of sin and the deliverance of the sinner.

X. IT MEETS ALL THE WANTS OF HUMANITY.

The display of Divine love given in the cross of Christ *has* met all the wants of humanity. Through it, God has not alone given to the universe an awful display of His determination

to make sin appear exceeding sinful, but has also manifested His quenchless love to the sinner. He has declared that, while He fills the throne of His glory, He will show to all created intelligence that even spotless purity, the beloved of God's own heart, voluntarily coming under the power of sin, cannot escape the fierceness of its enmity, and must endure the bitterness of its hatred until He separate Himself from it. In the same act God exhibits the infinite yearnings of His Fatherly heart towards the sinner, and proves His desire to save him from His sin, to conquer his rebellious spirit, and to fire his heart with glowing love to Himself. God gives up the Son of His love, the Creator of all things, the possessor of the same Divine nature with Himself, to endure all the rage of the sinner's enmity, and to atone for human guilt. Does He not thus prove what He is willing to do, what He actually has done, to save mankind? How, then, is faith produced? Is man ready to believe in God's Son?¹

¹ See "Province of Law," chap. xvi.

CHAPTER V.

FAITH.

I. IN ORDER TO SALVATION, MAN MUST BE INFLUENCED BY FAITH.

IN order to save man, it was necessary for God both to purpose the *end* and to create the *power* of salvation. It was also necessary to dispose the sinner himself to yield to the power and believe the purpose of the Father's heart. The sphere of Divine action which affords the fullest scope for the highest display of God's "manifold wisdom" is the spirit of man. To subdue the rebellious heart, to fire it with filial love and devotion to God, is the highest achievement of the Godhead. How God lodges the conviction of the truth displayed in the cross in the rebellious spirit, is a problem of Divine operation of the profoundest interest. For the understanding of this mystery it is necessary to consider the nature of influence. We speak of influence as something which *effects a change*, but this definition affords only a vague conception.

II. HOW INFLUENCE OPERATES.

With the nature of influence and its various kinds and degrees we are familiar; but of the *manner* of its operation we know little. Experience teaches that the nearer individuals stand to one another in the varying relations of life, the greater the influence they exert on each other. We exert a greater influence on sentient than on insentient existence, on rational than on irrational life. Men of kindred thought and feeling exert a greater mutual influence on each other than on individuals of opposite modes of thought and feeling. Influence, then, depends not only on the qualities of objects, and their modes of action, but likewise on the *conditions and states* of the subjects of it.

III. IT IS OF TWO KINDS.

Influence is both direct and indirect, mediate and immediate. Our bodies exert a direct influence on our minds, and *vice versa*; otherwise there would be some other existence that comes in between and communicates with both. If matter can exert a direct influence on mind, mind may exert a direct or immediate influence on mind.

IV. GOD ACTS IMMEDIATELY ON SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE.

Is God necessarily excluded from exerting *immediate* influence on His intelligent creatures in the development of their intellects, and in His rule over them? If so, then the nearer one being is assimilated, in its nature and life to another, the farther is he removed from the susceptibility of influencing those to which he is nearest in kin. Is it not natural to suppose that God in His government of the universe exerts His more immediate influence on *spiritual* than on *material* objects? If the nearer one nature approaches to another the more direct be the influence it is susceptible of receiving from that other; if man be created in the image of God; if collective humanity be allied in personal union with the Son of God, and thus stands in the nearest possible relationship with Him—humanity *must* be immediately and directly influenced by God.

V. DIVINE INFLUENCE DOES NOT DESTROY HUMAN FREEDOM.

The influence exerted on us by our fellow-creatures is so exerted, neither independently of, nor in opposition to, but through means of, and in harmony with, the principles of our nature as

rational beings. All the operations of nature, and of God in nature, are in harmony with the principles, constitution, and ends of existence. If, then, He "in whom we live, move, and have our being" exerts an influence on us, is it conceivable that He who knows our nature is intimately acquainted with all the springs of human action, has conferred upon man all the powers and susceptibilities of his existence, *would* move him so as to set aside or violate the essential conditions of his life? Is it probable that, in exerting an influence upon us, He should do violence to the constitution and principles of the very nature He has given us? Shallow, indeed, is the notion that Divine influence destroys the freedom of human action. It is a notion inconsistent with the teaching of nature, and that does violence to human reason. It is true that we do not know the *mode* in which the Divine influence operates in moving man; but neither do we know the exact mode in which *any* influence acts upon us. In originally creating the soul of man, God acted immediately upon it, and in re-creating it in the life most dependent upon Himself, with the susceptibility of the immediate reception of Himself, can He be regarded as acting so as only then the more effectually to exclude Himself from the human

spirit? Must not the quickening with God's own life be God's own immediate act?

VI. TO INFLUENCE THE REBEL SPIRIT IS
GOD'S SUPREME WORK.

But it must be remembered that the rebel, from the very nature of rebellion, must hate the sovereign against whom he is in rebellion. The self-willed, moreover, dislike and turn against all the restraints laid upon them by a superior authority, and put the worst construction on the action of such as would bring them under subjection. In order to induce self-willed, rebellious spirits to yield, they must be influenced in a way that will incline them to listen, so that they may perceive and understand. But how may the self-willed be induced to listen to that which they dislike and revolt from? To work a change in the unwilling mind is in no case an easy matter: in the rebellious spirit of the sinner it is, if we may say it with reverence, the most difficult work of the Godhead.

VII. THE FALLEN NATURE INTERVENES.

With all the evidences of the evil of sin forced upon the attention of men in their own experience; with all the display of the fearful opposition of the "carnal mind" given in the

cross ; with all the proofs of the Divine love and purpose of grace to man exhibited in the sacrifice of the Son to atone for their guilt—men will not of themselves look upon the cross so as to perceive the truth it teaches, nor turn to God by belief of the “truth as it is Jesus.” Ere the enmity of the “carnal mind” will yield to the display of Divine love given in the cross, a special act of the Spirit of God on the heart is required. The gospel is designed and fitted to change the heart, but the sinner, left to himself, will not allow the truth to act upon his heart. He guards it against the entrance of “the truth” by all the prejudice and repugnance of selfishness. Between the rebel heart and its reception of God’s grace stands, in full force, all the enmity of the fallen nature.

VIII. AND SHUTS THE SPIRITUAL SENSE IN MAN.

The self - sacrificing love displayed in the mission of Christ is above all things fitted to awaken love to God ; for love begets love. But this self - sacrifice of the Godhead on man’s behalf is felt to be such only when the death of Christ is seen to be the voluntary submission of the Divine to humanity, in order that by it God may convince man of sin, and prove the infinite

condescension of Divine love. It is comprehended only when there is perceived the Divine grace displayed in it, and this is understood only through a perception of the deep carnality of the human heart. Now, this perception is of all the most difficult for man to form ; morality in the life, acts of kindness to others, reverence in acts of formal devotion, all persuade the man that he is neither a hater of God nor of man. These notions shut the organs of spiritual vision to the manifestation in the cross of the guilt and corruption of the human heart. Against the entrance of this light of Christ, the enmity of the fallen nature rises in revolt. As the diseased eye gathers up its strength to exclude the light, so does the corrupt heart put forth all its self-deceiving power to shut out the pure light of God's gracious manifestation. Men "hate the light." In these words Christ teaches us that men hate not a partial or prejudiced view of the light, but the very light of God's manifestation given in Himself. They hate it, "because their deeds are evil ;" and they are reluctant to turn from them and have them exposed. The "carnal mind" persuades men that they hate not the light, but only false conceptions of it. The truth of God and all experience exposes the self-deception.

IX. MAN MUST BE BROUGHT BY GOD'S INFLUENCE TO BELIEVE AND LOVE THE TRUTH.

How, then, is God to impart to the sinner the love of the truth? By acting in his heart in opposition to, or irrespective of, the free and responsible nature? or by disregarding the ordinances He has Himself appointed for the conversion of souls? Such a supposition is opposed to every principle of the Divine character, to the dictates of reason, and the teachings of God's Word. "The truth as it is in Jesus" was not sent for the very purpose of saving man through its instrumentality, at such a cost of self-sacrifice on the part of the Godhead, and yet that the sinner's regeneration might be accomplished without its instrumentality. It is only by believing the truth that the sinner becomes alive unto God, and conscious of the blessings of salvation. But, in order to its being so believed, the truth must be either read or heard. There is no other channel than the preaching or the reading of God's Word through which the truth can enter into the mind.

X. MAN, AS A FREE AGENT, MUST CO-OPERATE WITH GOD.

Nor will God lodge the conviction of the truth in the mind in opposition, to, or irrespec-

tive of, the co-operation of man as a free agent with Himself in the employment of the appointed means of grace. The free agency of man being the supreme work of God in creation, and as all the principles of man's nature as a responsible being, all the avenues of approach to his heart, are fully known to God, in acting on man He does not operate independently of the principles of humanity. He accomplishes His ends in man by employing and perfecting all the functions of the human life.

XI. AND THE LAWS OF FREE AGENCY MUST BE MAINTAINED.

How God does this we know not; but thus much we do know, that the perfections of His character, the principles of His government, the properties of man's nature, all demand that He shall act in accordance with these essential conditions. And that God does so act is proved from the fact that, in connection with His awakening the Divine love in the soul of man, He suffers Himself to be "resisted," "grieved," "quenched." Revelation and human consciousness both attest that it is by means of the principles of man's nature that God regenerates the soul. It is not an act of omnipotent energy. If it were, could the Spirit be "grieved," "re-

sisted," "quenched"? Who can resist omnipotence? Can almighty energy be "quenched"? Can an irresistible will be "grieved"?¹

XII. HOW THE SPIRIT WORKS IN THE SINNER'S CONVERSION.

If it be lawful to hazard a supposition as to the manner in which the Spirit of God disposes a man to the reception of the truth, we may venture to suppose that, since the Spirit suffers Himself to be resisted, quenched, grieved, and has omniscience of all the springs of human volition, all the obstacles to the heart's embracing the truth, all the circumstances of each individual heart, He, in His infinite condescension, watches over and follows the sinner in all his wanderings, until He brings Him to the moment when some particular phase of Divine truth fitted to soften his heart, or arouse him to a discernment of his real state, causes the light of the gospel to fall upon his understanding.

¹ See "Self-sacrifices the Grandest Manifestations of the Divine," chap. iii.

CHAPTER VI.

SALVATION BY GRACE NOT A FINITE CONCEPTION.

I. THE CONCEPTION OF SALVATION BY GRACE WAS NOT POSSIBLE, EVEN TO ANGELS.

THERE are ideas included in the doctrine of salvation by grace which render it impossible for it to have originated even with the angels. Until they had learned that the conception proceeded from God alone they could not have given it credence. The end contemplated in salvation by grace—the fullest revelation of the perfections of the Godhead in their brightest glory for the recovery of fallen man—might be congenial to heavenly minds; but the mode of securing this end must have been alien from angelic hearts. The pure and loyal spirits of heaven could never have originated, far less cherished, the thought of the Godhead engaging in a stupendous act of self-sacrifice for the recovery of rebels, and their consequent eleva-

tion to the highest glory and bliss. They could not have conceived of the Father giving up the Son of His love to take on Himself all the responsibilities and consequences of human guilt. That He who was the "brightness of the Father's glory," should humble Himself and become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; that the Holy Spirit should enter into relations with the polluted spirit of man, to quicken it with the Divine life—these ideas must to angels have seemed incredible. No marvel that sinless intelligences gaze into the mysteries of human redemption, study them with intense interest, as the unfoldings of God's highest wisdom.

II. ANGELS COULD NOT HAVE CONCEIVED OF A SUFFERING LORD OF ALL.

Supposing that the high intelligences of heaven could have originated the conception of man, the fallen, being raised above their own rank, could their holy minds have entertained the idea of this being accomplished at the expense of the humiliation and suffering of the Sovereign Lord of all? Could they have originated the conception of man's being saved through the incarnation of his Creator, of rebels being raised to glory through the death of the

glorious Sovereign against whom they had rebelled ? The Father denying Himself, rending His own heart in giving up the Son of His love to the death of the cross ; the Son leaving the bosom of the Father, stooping to all the shame and anguish of Calvary ; the Holy Spirit taking up His abode with sinful flesh !—these were conceptions fitted only to appal their adoring hearts. The conception of the Blessed God uniting Himself in personal and permanent union with the nature that had rebelled against Him ; of the Lord of glory condescending to enter into a personal encounter with the powers of darkness, subjecting Himself to the scorn and contumacy of men, enduring the hiding of His Father's face in order that He might the more strikingly exhibit the love of God for fallen man and create the power of human redemption—is not this a conception that could never have entered into the hearts of angels to conceive ?

III. NOR OF A NEWER AND GRANDER DISPLAY OF GOD'S CHARACTER THENCE RESULTING.

Neither could the conception of God's giving a new and grander display of His Divine character for such an end have originated with finite intelligences. The manifestation of the

Divine perfections and character given in the work of human redemption is the highest which God has given of Himself, far surpassing all His other manifestations in creation. Now no creature, however exalted in rank, can surpass in its conceptions of the Divine the manifestations that God gives of Himself. The revelations which He affords of His own perfection, the disclosures He makes of the deep mysteries of His councils, must of necessity be the highest known to finite minds. Even if we could imagine that the angels standing before God could penetrate into the innermost recesses of the infinite mind, discover what is known only to the eternal Godhead, and perceive the depths of its undisclosed perfections, we yet could not suppose that they would reveal those perfections which He retains within Himself, far less take upon them to surpass the intentions of the infinite mind in affording still higher manifestations of Himself than He had ever given to them. This would have been but another form of rebellion against God. It would have been claiming the glory due to Him alone. To Him it belongs essentially to disclose the highest perfections of His own Divine Being. Is it possible to conceive that angels could have given to men a disclosure of higher perfections

in the Infinite God than He had given of Himself?

IV. SALVATION BY GRACE IS ONE OF THE
“DEEP THINGS OF GOD.”

The conception of salvation by grace is a revelation of the “deep things of God” given by Himself. Had it been possible for angels to have surpassed God Himself in knowledge of these “deep things,” and in zeal for the revelation of the Divine, would not their pure hearts and loyal spirits have restrained them from attempting to give forth these revelations as proceeding from God Himself? We are warranted in holding to the belief that even if it had been possible for angels to conceive the idea of raising man to glory, and winning honour for law-breakers and rebels, through the obedience of the Law-giver and Sovereign, they would have rejected the thought as a suggestion of the implacable foe of both God and man. They would have shrunk from entertaining it with all the loathing of holy and unfallen natures. The thought of usurping the right of God to reveal Himself, or of seizing on His prerogative of disclosing His own thoughts, and endeavouring to surpass in their revelations of the Divine the manifestations He had given of Himself, would

be abhorrent to their pure spirits. No ; all the spontaneous and cherished emotions of their adoring minds, the thrilling delight of their pure hearts, is in conceiving of God as dwelling in the exalted blessedness of His own supreme sovereignty, clothed in the highest effulgence of uncreated light, revealing the immeasurable perfections of His infinite grandeur in the effluent radiations of His infinite nature. Could the conception of bringing the Creator down to the likeness of the sinful creature—He who dwelt in the Father's bosom to the manger of Bethlehem, to the houseless abode of the mountain side, to the cross of Calvary — have originated with angels ?

V. THE MEANS OF ACCOMPLISHING IT ARE THE
VERY OPPOSITE TO THOSE WHICH ANGELS
WOULD HAVE CONCEIVED.

The conception is, let it be remembered, to effect the salvation of the sinful creature through the humiliation and suffering of the Creator Himself, to elevate the law-breaker through the Law-giver's endurance of the penalty of the broken law ; to dignify the rebel through the self-sacrifice of the Sovereign ; to secure eternal life to man, dead in trespasses and sins, at the expense of the death of the Son of God. Could

such a conception have originated with spirits whose thoughts of God, whose chief delights are in knowing Him as dwelling in the sublime, underived consciousness of His uncreated, infinite, and eternal perfections, enthroned in grandeur, glory, and blessedness far beyond the loftiest flight of finite conception, and knowing, too, that their loftiest ideas yet fall infinitely short of the unspeakable reality — they who bow before His throne in deepest self-abasement, in profoundest reverence, in adoring, silent awe of the infinite Majesty and Glory ?

Could the conception of the Creator stooping from the throne of His glory, obscuring the splendour of His infinite majesty, taking on Him the form of a servant, uniting into personal union with His own Divine nature that of sinful man, suffering at the hands of sinners the penalties due to themselves, expiating the guilt of their transgression by the sacrifice of Himself, and all this in order that He might offer the only manifestation of the Divine glory that could win the heart of the sinner to God : could this conception have originated even with angels ? The conception in its majestic magnitude, its stupendous vastness, its marvellous glory, at once discloses that it was impossible of origination with the loftiest spirits in the uni-

verse, or with any mind excepting that of the uncreated God alone.

VI. THE ANGELS COULD NOT HAVE CONCEIVED OF THE ALMIGHTY CREATOR HUMBLING HIMSELF.

On the one hand, we see a race of guilty rebels, hating God, cherishing dark suspicions, most unworthy thoughts, of God ; conceiving of Him as a tyrannical oppressor of their race ; and on the other hand, we see a horde of spirits, malignant and infernal, exulting in their imagined triumph over God, feeding their devilish malice in enhancing, as they suppose, the misery of man. We look away from this sight to the contemplation of the adoring hosts of heaven, awed by the sight of rebellion and revolt against the Sovereign of the universe, astonished at such guilt and ingratitude against the Maker of heaven and earth, and in token of their holy indignation at such daring wickedness bowing before the throne in deepest prostration and adoration ; giving utterance to their spontaneous, glowing love, in songs of loftiest ascription of praise, to Him who sitteth on His rightful and righteous throne ; cherishing with fervent delight their highest conceptions of His infinite grandeur ; conscious that the most exalted

thoughts they can conceive of His majesty and glory fall infinitely short of the reality. We look to the mode of accomplishing the conception of salvation by grace, and we perceive that such a conception could never have originated with these holy intelligences, nor with any finite mind, but only in the gracious heart of the all-loving and infinitely holy God.

VII. LOVE DOES NOT CONCEIVE OF ITS OBJECT AS SUBJECTED TO SHAME AND SUFFERING.

It is not of the nature of love to conceive of its object as subjected to shameful suffering and ignominious death. Neither is it of the nature of envy to heap honour and glory on the object of its malignant hate. Nor is it of the nature of rebellious enmity to array in brightest glory the sovereign against whom it had rebelled. Nor is it of the nature of selfishness to rob itself of what it eagerly covets, nor to bring upon itself what it dreads and loathes. Nor is it the work of self-love to deprive itself of all that it desires in order that it may possess what it detests and abhors. If this were the nature of hate, of selfishness, of love, then might the conception of salvation by grace have originated in a created mind. But if not, the idea could never have been conceived, the plan could never have been

devised, the work could never have been accomplished, by hell, or earth, or angels. Only from the depths of the infinite riches of Godhead could salvation have come.

VIII. THEREFORE THE CONCEPTION MUST BE FROM GOD ALONE.

Who but the gracious God Himself could have thought of raising rebellious sinners against Himself to the highest glory, to the likeness of His own image, to the Divine fellowship, by the sacrifice of Himself? Such wondrous condescension, such an amazing plan, could have been devised only by the Triune Godhead—Father, Son, and Spirit. At what an infinite distance stands the Godhead from man! Yet in the Divine Son how near God comes to man! How inconceivable the cost of human salvation! How rich the grace which saves man from ruin! The two main facts on which Christianity rests, then, are sinful nature in man and the Divine nature in Christ. Those two solid pillars bear up the beautiful fabric of grace. The one exhibits the enmity of the carnal mind; the other exhibits all the hopes of the believing soul. Against both stand vainly arrayed all the artillery of unbelief. To overcome the enmity of the carnal mind, to open up the fountains of fer-

vent love to God in the heart of the free agent, to emancipate and perfect this free agency ; such is the threefold work that displays the brightest glory of the Godhead. The perfection of freedom for the spirit is the most glorious condition of finite existence. To have given man the power that can accomplish this freedom in him, after his long and fruitless struggles to emancipate himself, is an unanswerable demonstration of the Divine origin of Christianity.

IX. AND IT PROVES THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE.

If we had no evidence of the inspiration of the Scriptures but that which arises out of the impossibility of salvation by grace having originated in any other mind than God's, we should have sufficient proof to convince us that the Book is from God. It never could have proceeded from any merely finite mind. We can conceive but of three orders of finite intelligence ; and if we can see, as we do see, that the plan of salvation could never have come from either of these, then are we shut up to the conclusion that it is of God alone.

BOOK FIFTH.

THE IDEAL OF CHRIST SUPERHUMAN.

CHAPTER I.

CHRIST'S IDEAL OF HIS KINGDOM.

I. CHRIST PROCLAIMED HIS PURPOSE.

CHRIST proclaimed that He was to found His kingdom by a manifestation of self-sacrifice, and a display of unparalleled love, for the glory of God and the good of men. He asserted that the sole agent He would employ in the establishment of His dominion was the Eternal Spirit of the living God, and the only weapon He would use in the advancement of His reign would be the truth about Himself. He would only admit individuals into His kingdom by their belief of the truth as revealed in and from Himself.

II. HE MADE HIMSELF THE CENTRE OF THAT PURPOSE.

He told His disciples that they would attain perfection only as they became assimilated to Him. He foretold that His kingdom was to

advance from a small beginning through persecution, controversy, and strife with the powers of darkness, until it should embrace every nation on the face of the whole earth—the entire range of finite existence ; and that to consummate His reign would require many ages and generations. His dominion was to begin with the spiritual advance through the intellectual, and manifest itself in the social and national life of mankind. His foes were not the potentates of earth simply as such, nor the principles of social and national rule, but the powers and principalities of evil, the *inclinations* of selfishness.

III. HE CLAIMED FOR HIMSELF EQUALITY WITH THE FATHER.

He asserted for Himself an equality of nature with His Father ; claimed to be essentially one with the Father ; the revealer of God, *because* the revealed God ; sent from the Father ; having the presence, power, and sanction of the Father in all that He said and did. He assumed to Himself the right of universal sovereignty, claimed unlimited dominion over spirit, mind, and matter, over the individual, social, and national life of mankind, and over all the powers of darkness ; the right and power of reforming the customs, of remodelling the institutions, of

changing the laws of all nations on the face of the earth, of bringing into one under one Father the entire human race. His foes, He said, were no other than the enemies of mankind—the corruptions of the selfish heart—the tormentors of the life of man. From the beginning of His mission He undertook His work with the avowed purpose of quickening the spirit, unburdening the conscience, enlightening the mind of every believer in Him ; He set Himself to the task of rebinding the heart of humanity in grateful and admiring love to God. The intention of Christ was to overthrow His enemies, and win His converts by a display of self-sacrificing devotedness to the glory of God in the good of man ; to employ no weapon in the establishment and extension of His kingdom but the truth about Himself ; to place this instrument in the power of the Spirit of God, and by so doing found and advance His kingdom. By converting men to God He imparts His own Spirit and mind, life and peace, and joy to them, thus rescuing them from the powers of evil. He taught that His reign was to start from a small beginning and advance through outer and inner conflict, through all the coming ages, till at length it should not only embrace the entire family of man but the whole universe of being.

IV. HIS KINGDOM WAS TO BE FOUNDED AND
MAINTAINED BY LOVE.

He taught that His kingdom was to be founded in love, based on truth, and realised in righteousness. All in it were to be brethren, sons of God, princes of the blood-royal of heaven. They were to reign with Him by being *in* Him, through His being in them. They were to be brought into union with Him by believing in Him, and to become united with Him by coming to Him, groaning under conscious guilt, to receive Him by faith ; and He was to give them rest by quickening them with His own love and life. He was to be their Light, Resurrection Life, Bread of Life ; and they by feeding on Him were to live in realisation of the merciful, in reflecting the Divine, in advancing the peaceful. In all the conflicts in which they should be involved, they were to look to Him and receive from Him the encouragement and consolation needful to ensure their victory. He was to go before them in preparing for their reign with Him in the conscious possession, perfection, and bliss of the spiritual and Divine life ; and at the end of the world He was to come again to receive them into everlasting fellowship with Himself, in His reign over all finite existence.

He asserted that He would found and establish His kingdom in opposition to the powers of darkness, in defiance of the machinations and craft of wicked men; nay, that He would overrule the actions of His enemies for the founding of His kingdom and the experience of His reign in the lives of His disciples. His reign in the believer would assimilate his spirit, mind, and life into oneness with His own; would afford to the believer the consciousness of the Divine life, fill him with the fulness of God, raise him above the limits of the finite, secure for his spirit rest in the knowledge of the illimitable, introduce him into the truth, and enable him to attain to the true end of existence.

V. AND IT WAS THUS TO REUNITE MAN TO GOD.

Here, then, we have the conception of the essentially Divine, the tenderly beloved of the Father, proceeding from the inner depths of the Godhead into the region of the dark, disturbed, and conflicting life of man, to reunite to God all of humanity that is still susceptible of the Divine, in all the beauty and bliss of harmonious and ever-deepening fellowship of love, and glory, and joy. We have the self-sacrificing Divine Being descending into the conflict of

disturbed spiritual existence, in order that He might encounter the enmity of the diabolic, and bear the justice of the immutable, by overcoming the one in the manifestation of the other. It was thus that He created the light and influence necessary for the readjustment of every agent, principle, and element of discordant being, and bringing them into such harmony that each and all would have their own ; so that, with the exclusion of the obstinately rebellious, an eternal concord of all that was truly susceptible and Godlike in the finite world might, through a disciplinary process, be ultimately secured to God.

VI. THE PROCESS WAS TO BE GRADUAL.

And all this was to be accomplished, not in the haste of impatience, but in a period of duration corresponding to the magnitude of the undertaking and the conception of Him who originated the design, with whom "a thousand years is as one day," a period affording ample scope for the evolution of every quality, element, or relation of principle, every action of power, every characteristic of life, so that the profound and comprehensive wisdom, the benignant and gracious design, the underlying power of the originating and presiding intelligence, would be

disclosed in a manner that would bind in everlasting admiration, gratitude, and love every loyal spirit throughout the eternal ages.

VII. THE KINGDOM IS THE LOST IDEAL OF HUMANITY.

This is the kingdom after which humanity in all lands and ages has searched, in the speculations of philosophy or devout aspiration. It is the state of existence which centres in it the idol of the devotee, the ideal of the philosopher, the conception of the enthusiast, the aim of the warrior, the desire of the man of pleasure.

VIII. AND IT IS EXACTLY ADAPTED TO MAN.

It is the dominion which is adapted to the nature, needed by the circumstances, and adequate to the longings of man in all regions, ages, and conditions of human existence. It is the reign in and over man which purifies, calms, harmonises, elevates, dignifies, satisfies, and rejoices the spirit of all who come under its sway. It is the Infinite coming into the finite, the Divine descending into the human, the pure entering into the corrupt, the mighty energising the weak, the living quickening the dying, the luminous guiding the inquiring, the fulness of

the Divine gratifying the cravings of the empty, longing spirit of man.

It is the outcome of the Divine to meet the sighing of the soul of humanity in the struggling after life in which the striving spirit eagerly engages—the victory for which oppressed souls long—the triumph after which all peoples of all ages and climes have cried—which priests, prophets, warriors, and kings have promised to bestow, but could not. It is the condition and life which desire cannot surmount, of which human imagination could not have conceived, nor the mere efforts of man ever reach.

IX. CHRIST STANDS ALONE AS THE FOUNDER OF THE KINGDOM.

In His being, character, and work, Christ stands alone, and unapproached by any other founder of religion or teacher of truth. He is not only the founder of a religion, He is Himself the foundation of all religious hope, all life, glory, and bliss ; not simply the revealer of sublime and soul-quicken^g truth, but the truth of the revelation ; not merely the quickener of the spirit of man with immortal life, but Himself the life ; not only the Saviour of men, but the salvation. He stands in relation to His

doctrines, His disciples, and His work as no other teacher of truth or guide of life ever has stood, or ever can stand. Christ's ideal is an original, sublime, Divine conception, impossible to any but the infinite and eternal mind of God.

CHAPTER II.

CHRIST'S IDEAL.

I. CHRIST'S CONCEPTION IS UNIQUE.

THE conception of the Incarnate One coming into this world to found a kingdom, by a stupendous act of self-sacrificing devotedness to the glory of God and the good of men, through the agency of the Spirit of God ; sanctioning no instrumentality in the extension of that kingdom other than the truth about Himself ; and admitting men into the fellowship of it only through faith in Him : this is a conception so original that it has no equal in the whole history of the human mind.

II. IT COULD ORIGINATE ONLY IN GOD.

To commence His conquest of the immortal spirit by quickening it with the Divine life ; to carry forward His reign from a feeble beginning to a glorious and triumphant consummation, through conflict with the powers of darkness and

the selfishness of man ; to overcome the “carnal mind ;” to gather into one eternal kingdom myriads of immortal spirits, that He might reign over them in the impartation of the Divine nature ; to secure their triumph over all evil, and to make them eternally blessed in the possession of all the fulness of God : this conception could only have originated with Infinite Wisdom and Power.

III. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO HUMAN REASON.

It is so peculiar to Him as never to have found a place either in the ravings of madness, the dreams of fanaticism, the ambition of kings, the speculations of philosophers, the fancy of poets, the sayings of genius, the presentiments of antiquity, the unconscious prophecies of heathenism, the aspirations of the heart, or the thoughts of the mind of man. The extant writings of antiquity, in all their variety of theme and richness of style, give no indication of such a conception. We may unhesitatingly assume that were the calcined dust of the Alexandrian library resuscitated, and all the past and existing libraries of the world searched through, they would not be found to contain in them any vestige of such a conception, any hint of such a Divine idea. This is a conception so original, so peculiar to Christ,

as to be unequalled, unapproached by all the nations of the earth. It is a conception that could never have been conceived by man ; for it is not only above the highest flight of his fancy, but in direct opposition to all the ideas and desires of his carnal mind.

IV. IT IS TRANSCENDENTLY SUBLIME.

The conception is not only original, but sublime, surpassing in its grandeur all human conception. An obscure artizan, reared in a remote rural province of a despised nation, untutored in human learning, unskilled in the diplomacy of courts, unaided by the wisdom of man, without counsellors or army ; yet claiming absolute right to rule the human mind, to hold in His grasp all material law, legislating for the personal, social, national life of all mankind, in accordance with the essential principles of being ; taking on Himself the responsibility of enlightening all minds in the nature, obligations, and end of all existence ; of emancipating the spirit of man from selfishness and delusion ; of developing all finite life in union and communion with the eternal and infinite Life ; of reuniting man to God in the bonds of everlasting gratitude : this is a conception which comprehends the whole counsel of God, measures the capacities of the finite, sounds the

very depths of human woe, and brings to its aid all that is requisite to restore and perfect humanity.

V. AND THE METHOD IS **EQUALLY UNIQUE
AND SUBLIME.**

His conquest was not merely the subjugation of His enemies, but their emancipation. He extended His reign, not at the expense, but by the elevation, of His subjects. His rule was not by the restraints of law, but by the power of love.

A Sovereign was conspired against by His Cabinet Council. The conspiracy was detected, and the ministers were condemned to death. But the King loved them, and desired to give them the final proof of His love, so that He might convince them of the unreasonableness of their rebellion, and win back their loyalty. He gives up His own Son to die in the stead of the rebels, that He may gain for them participation in His son's titles and inheritance ; and He raises that Son from the dead, not to dispute their title to share with Him in His sovereignty, but to endorse their enjoyment of it by securing for them oneness of life with Himself.

VI. CHRIST'S IDEAL OF HIS CONQUEST IS ALSO UNIQUE.

Christ's ideal of His conquest and reign shows the injured Sovereign of the universe, by one grand act of self-sacrifice, convincing His rebel children of the groundlessness of their suspicions, dread, and dislike of Him, assuring them of His love and willingness to secure their well-being by means of His infinite resources, so that He might fill their hearts with love and gratitude, and restore them to fellowship with Himself. This was the sublimest conception of conquest ever revealed to the human mind.

VII. AND DIVINE.

And the conception is Divine. It was a profound, comprehensive, complete conception, embracing the necessities of all being in all its relations throughout time and eternity. It involves the consciousness of omnipotence. It fully penetrates the true nature of evil, and meets all the necessities of man. It comprehends the designs of Godhead, discloses the purposes of the eternal council, lays bare the heart of God. Who could have conceived of creating from the chaos of human life the loveliest cosmos of order and beauty that can be realised by finite beings, excepting He who possessed in Himself

all the perfection of manhood and all the fulness of God? Who could undertake to expel all darkness, error, and prejudice from the human mind, and to irradiate it with the light of eternal truth, excepting He who was Himself the Truth? Who could lift the burden of guilt from the human conscience, allure to the love to God the rebellious heart of humanity, harmonise the inner life of man, bestow peace and joy upon the world, excepting He who is the light and life of men? Who could disclose to human view the divinest perfections of the Godhead; by one act of self-sacrifice encounter and overcome the powers of darkness; claim a place in the human heart above the nearest and dearest earthly relations; nay, demand a place in the affections equal to that belonging of right to the Infinite Father Himself; excepting one conscious of standing in the nearest relations at once to God and to humanity?

CHAPTER III.

CHRIST'S ACCOMPLISHMENT OF HIS IDEAL.

I. THE ACCOMPLISHMENT BEFITS THE IDEAL.

THE conception of Christ's kingdom is no less Divine, original, and sublime than His mode of acquiring it. Not by might, nor by power ; not with promises of wealth and honours to His followers ; not with the arts of diplomacy, the mortifications of the ascetic, the sacrifices of the priest, the speculations of the philosopher, the display of genius, nor the energies of patriotism, did Christ establish His kingdom. By such methods have men risen to dominion over mankind ; but Christ's method stands alone.

II. IT IS THE MANIFESTATION OF HIMSELF.

It was by the manifestation of Himself, the revelation of the truth embodied in Him, and by yielding Himself up to the powers of darkness for a time that His conquest was to be secured.

He alone acquired dominion over the minds and consciences of men by an ignominious death. His method was by Himself entering into human life as its quickening power, not to coerce or restrain its principles and powers, but to expel corruption. All dominion over man which is not gained through this enlightening and purifying process, Christ repudiates. Granting scope to the human spirit to display all its enmity and opposition to Him, He yet takes possession of it and reigns in it, harmonises and blesses it in the highest possible degree, subduing it into the likeness of His own gentle, pure, generous, but resolute spirit. And He begins this conquest by demanding the full surrender of all that is dear to the carnal heart.

III. HIS METHOD IS PERFECT AND COMPLETE.

Christ's method is perfect and complete. The disciple, the Church, the world, have been vainly trying to improve upon it from His time until now ; but all these attempts only display human infatuation. They but debar men from the blessings of His reign, and retard the rapid advancement of His kingdom.

CHAPTER IV.

CHRIST'S IDEAL REALISED.

I. CHRIST'S IDEAL IS REALISED.

CHRIST'S ideal is more than a conception ; it is a realised fact. It has been realised in the experience of human souls from the time of its Founder down to the present hour. Multitudes of believers have testified to the blessedness they have derived from Him, and their confidence in His truth. They have evinced zeal for the progress of His reign, and a willingness even to lay down their lives for His honour and kingdom.

II. EXPERIENCE PROVES THE TRIUMPH.

The triumph of His kingdom supports the testimony of His disciples. That He is subduing the nations, reigning over the spirits and lives of men, is a fact attested by the experience of nineteen centuries. This victory, He declared, He came to achieve ; and He *has* achieved it in

the very manner He foretold. He reigns in the minds of His disciples and over His Church, not by the maxims of philosophy, nor the dogmas of science, but by faith in Himself. His Spirit wins their minds to His truth, their wills to His life, working in them all God's good pleasure. And by His reign in His disciples He is constantly moulding the customs, changing the laws, ameliorating the condition of mankind. It is His Spirit in His followers that erects hospitals, emancipates slaves, purifies the laws, humanises prison discipline, elevates labour, breaks the power of caste and class. He binds the hearts of men to Himself and to one another in bonds of love and self-sacrifice. The subjects of His kingdom, the laws of His rule, the principles of His reign are unlike those of all human societies.

III. ITS SUCCESS PROVES ITS DIVINE ORIGIN.

The principle on which Christ founded His kingdom, to be successful, must have been in accordance with the order of nature, the dictates of reason, and the necessities of man. What is this underlying principle? It is that God shall be supreme in human life; that the soul shall be recognised as truly the man, and its present and everlasting salvation be made the first concern

of all men. He acquired His kingdom by the power of self-sacrifice, exhausting opposition by yielding to its power, and rising triumphant over hell and death. This Godlike ideal is not alone a conception impossible to any finite intelligence ; it is also a realised FACT.

CHAPTER V.

THE CONCEPTION OF THE KINGDOM IMPOSSIBLE TO MEN.

I. THE VIEW OF GOD GIVEN IN THIS IDEAL IS UNIQUE.

THE view of the Divine character exhibited in the conception of salvation by grace proves that it could not have originated with man. Sin shuts man out from fellowship with the Divine nature. It involves him in spiritual conflict, and leaves him no communion with God but through the retributive action of the Divine law. Looking to God through the medium of his disturbed conscience, he beholds a frown on the Divine countenance. He conceives of God, not as the loving Father, long-suffering, merciful, self-sacrificing, but as a wrathful and avenging Judge.

II. MEN NATURALLY TAKE THE VERY OPPOSITE VIEW. *

The history of "natural religion" fully exhibits the existence of this truth. The endeavours of

+ often it is harder for ^{to} reason the opposite of any moral rule than of any immoral one

men to propitiate Heaven by sacrifices and penances, to interest God in human well-being, to soften His disposition, change His mind, and alter His demands, can only be accounted for by the fact that man thus conceives of God. That indifference to religion which prevails even in Christian lands, the disregard of the law and authority of God so common amongst all classes of human society, can only be explained on the admission that God is held to be a Being to be dreaded.

But the conception of salvation by grace reveals God as the loving Father, the benevolent Law-giver, the self-sacrificing Redeemer. It represents Him as opening up all the fulness of His infinite resources to bestow His most precious gifts on sinners and rebels. It exhibits Him to human view *so* loving sinners that He is impatient, if we may so speak, to confer upon them all that the Godhead can bestow.

III. IT IS A CONCEPTION IMPOSSIBLE TO A FALLEN BEING.

The supposition that such a conception could have originated with man sets aside at once the opposition of principles and the antagonistic elements in his fallen nature. The conception of the Divine character contained in the doctrine

of salvation by grace, and the ideas entertained of God amongst mankind generally, are as opposite as the poles. Could the idolater conceive of God as a Spirit of light, love, and self-sacrificing grace? Could the propitiation of idols by the sacrifice of his own offspring, laceration of his body, loud supplication to his gods, consist with the idea of God as the Father in heaven, eternal in His love, boundless in mercy, self-sacrificing in His grace, yearning to embrace repentant sinners, taking supreme delight in glorifying them with the righteousness of His Son, and bestowing on them His own infinite fulness? Could those who dreaded and disliked God conceive of Him as creating all things for the sake of man; subjugating the powers of darkness by the sacrifice of Himself for the liberation of sinners; subordinating the principles of His government, and consecrating the perfections of His Being, for man's glory and bliss; standing at the door of the sinner's heart and knocking to obtain an entrance that He may fill the sinner with the blessedness of His presence? Could the disobedient, the rebellious, the hater of God, so conceive of Him? Impossible!

IV. SO IS THE CONCEPTION OF SALVATION BY
GRACE.

Neither could the conception of salvation by grace, as it regards fallen man himself, have originated with him ; for the view it gives of sin, and the things it requires of him, are the exact opposite of what he entertains and is inclined to do. The estimate he forms of himself is that he is unfortunate in his circumstances, but, on the whole, noble and generous in his dispositions, earnest in his endeavours to elevate his condition, and ultimately certain of attaining perfection of his life. He believes himself truth-seeking, virtuous, devout, ready to embrace truth wherever he finds it. These are the sentiments of the "carnal" man, whether he be idolater, Pharisee, or unbeliever. He will not admit that he is a hater of God, of truth, of righteousness. He repudiates the idea that he is righteously condemned to death on account of his sin. And he will not acknowledge that he is so depraved as to be unable of himself to think, feel, or act aright. On the other hand, the estimate of man included in the conception of salvation by grace is that he is rebellious in disposition, false in his conceptions, disobedient, selfish, helpless to attain his own well-being. It declares that the sinner

is leagued with Satan to overthrow the throne of God, and to set His authority at defiance ; and that in so doing he is bent on his own eternal ruin. The terrible words of the Saviour to His enemies are these : “Ye are of your father the devil, and the works of your father ye will do !” “Ye will *not* come unto me, that ye might have life.” “This is the condemnation, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light, because their deeds were evil.”

V. MAN IS A REBEL, AND AN ENEMY OF GOD.

Opposed to God, a rebel against Him, ever suspecting Him, and taking the worst view of His character and doings, man proved His enmity by joining with the powers of darkness in putting the Son of God to an ignominious death. He cannot of himself conceive of God as the loving Father, long-suffering, merciful, and gracious ; as so loving men as to give His only-begotten Son to die for them. Hence the world’s dislike and opposition to the doctrine of God’s grace. Hence the slow progress of Christianity, the difficulties of conversion, the numberless efforts to corrupt the truth of Christianity, the bitter persecutions of the Church.

VI. AND THEREFORE OPPOSED TO SALVATION
BY GRACE.

But the unregenerate man is more than ignorant of the principle of salvation by grace : he is opposed to all that the gospel requires of him, to repudiation of self, loathing carnality in him, repenting of his sin, returning to God by reception of the truth. The conception of salvation by grace never could have originated with man. The opposition of unbelief to Christianity, the incessant attempts of infidelity to deny the truth of the gospel, the efforts of rationalism to explain away the doctrines of grace, the reluctance of man everywhere to receive Christ's truth, the unwillingness to yield to Christ, the struggles of the believer himself in keeping alive the grace of God in his heart—all these prove that salvation by grace is an idea and a doctrine coming directly from God.

VII. HIS CONCEPTIONS OF HIS OWN WELL-BEING ARE OPPOSED TO THE GOSPEL VIEW.

Neither could the conception of, as it regards the source and principles of human well-being, have originated with man ; for all these are just the reverse of what man conceives of as fitted to promote his own happiness. He imagines true happiness and dignity to consist in possessing

and enjoying the things of this present life, in securing the esteem of his fellow-men, in commending himself to God. Give him but his heart's desire of wealth, power, fame, and he will be happy. He needs not to occupy his thoughts about God ; but if he gets to heaven in the end, it will be all the same with him there, whether or not he gave attention to Divine things or neglected them. He perceives no real connection between his life here and his life hereafter. He does not know that *here* he is forming the character which is to be fully developed and completed hereafter. But salvation by grace teaches that man must live to God in all that he is and does ; that he must give every thought, feeling, and desire to God ; and in order to be able to do this must undergo a radical change of heart and mind and life ; he must forsake all that his corrupt heart is set upon, and hate even his own life. It declares that his conceptions regarding the character of God and the way of life are false and misleading, his desires evil, his likings ruinous, his progress a descent to hell. It requires of him that he yield himself implicitness to the law of Christ. Salvation by grace not alone makes known to man his capacity for the Divine indwelling, but it assures him that his well-being for time and eternity is conditional on his realisa-

tion of that indwelling, and through the transformation of his spirit into the image of God; that he is safe and blessed exactly in the measure of his possessing the Divine presence and image. It makes known to him that his condition in the life to come depends on the advance he makes in the Divine life here, and by no means on the merit of his own actions. These doctrines, and the sentiments of unregenerate man, are as antagonistic as are truth and falsehood, love and enmity, life and death. If they had originated with man, would he have resisted and opposed them? Does not "the world love its own"? Is any author in literature, or scientific man, or artist indifferent to his own work? Does he put forth his energies to destroy, mutilate, pervert them? If these doctrines had been of human invention, would the world have striven to corrupt them? Does the sectarian labour to refute his own errors, and persecute the creed he believes in? No! conception of salvation by grace, so far from being the spontaneous utterance of the natural heart, is the divinest outflowing of the Godhead itself.

VIII. THE DIVINE ORIGIN OF CHRISTIANITY
EXPLAINS THE OPPOSITION OF MAN.

The difficulty of bringing man to believe the gospel and comprehend the doctrines of grace is instantly accounted for on the admission of the supernatural origin of Christianity, but utterly inexplicable on the supposition of its human origin. Man easily understands, and readily embraces, what is human; but he feels reluctant to acknowledge the rebelliousness of his heart, and a difficulty in comprehending the principles of self-sacrificing grace. The antagonism of the carnal mind to the doctrines of grace makes plain the ground of the world's persecution of Christ. It also explains the reason for its clinging to the *forms* instead of to the *spirit* of the gospel, to the doctrines of the sect rather than the principles of Christianity. Could the idea of exposing the deep depravity of the human heart, the wickedness of men, and of requiring the complete surrender of all their most dearly-cherished desires and expectations, of necessitating him to hate what he loves and to love what he hates, have originated with man, whose every effort is to excuse and justify himself even at the expense of charging the guilt of his transgressions on

God? Impossible! The principles of salvation by grace, the workings of the natural heart, as well as the conflict that exists between that doctrine and the heart's sentiments, prove conclusively that this grand fundamental doctrine of Christianity cannot be of man, must be of God.

BOOK SIXTH.

CHRIST'S TRIUMPH SUPERHUMAN.

CHAPTER I.

THE BEGINNINGS OF CHRISTIANITY.

I. THE EARLY PROGRESS OF CHRISTIANITY PROVES ITS DIVINE ORIGIN.

CHRISTIANITY at its outset proved that it was possessed of a power superior to all the powers of earth, for it advanced in the face of all opposition, all attempts to modify and corrupt it. Every effort that the political and ecclesiastical power could put forth to retard its advance, or change its character, was persistently made. Yet it has risen superior to every attack.

The gospel preached from Jerusalem speedily took possession of the land ; and passing over to Asia Minor, caused its provinces, and even Imperial Rome, to acknowledge its sway. The novel and strange doctrine of the cross filled the civilised world. The temples of heathenism were abandoned ; their altars ceased to smoke with sacrifices ; priestcraft itself became unpopular. The wisdom of Athenian philosophy

could not withstand the “foolishness of preaching.” The eloquence of its orators failed to captivate in the presence of the simplicity of the gospel. The imperial spirit of Rome bowed before the meekness of the cross. Civilisation became refined under its influence, and barbarism became gentle at its touch. St. Paul could boast that “*the gospel was preached to every creature under heaven.*” Even the enemies of Christianity confessed the same truth.¹

So readily, so universally did the nation flow into the Church, so powerful were the tidings of salvation through a crucified Redeemer in subjugating men to the obedience of the faith, that three centuries only had passed away from the commencement of Christ’s ministry when the civilised world acknowledged His right to reign.

II. NO PARALLEL IN THIS RESPECT BETWEEN CHRISTIANITY AND ANY OTHER RELIGION.

A parallel has been asserted between the rapid spread of Buddhism, and of Mohammedanism, and that of Christianity. But the analogy is only apparent, not real. The parallel omits all considerations of the diverse characters of

¹ See Appendix.

these religions, and of the varying circumstances of their progress. The rapidity of progress made by any religion is, after all, an inadequate test. In the moral, and especially in the spiritual, advance of any religion lies the evidence of its genuineness. Christianity, in this respect, contrasts and does not compare with either Buddhism or Mohammedanism. Their castes, their mysticisms and licentiousness, their cruelties and brutalities leave them at an immeasurable distance beneath the purity, the refinement, the fraternal sympathy, the intellectual power which Christianity inspires. Spiritual progress is not alone unknown but impossible to heathenism. In this regard, Christianity stands alone and unapproachable.

III. IT ALONE RESTORES THE LOST DIVINE IMAGE.

Christianity alone restores the lost Divine image to the immortal spirit of man. This is its final test, and the greatest work of the God-head. The painter puts forth all his skill to trace on the canvas the image of his ideal. The sculptor patiently chisels the block into the expression of his conception of perfect beauty. The teacher glows with enthusiasm in conveying to the mind of his pupil his own

clear views of truth. So the Godhead "*travails in the greatness of His strength*" to remould the inner life of man to the Divine model, to open and fill his capacities, refine his faculties, educate his powers, captivate his aspirations, raises him into the possession of the highest attainments, impels him to perform the noblest deeds, acquire the most illustrious character, enjoy the divinest satisfactions.

IV. THIS IS GOD'S HIGHEST END IN CREATION AND REDEMPTION.

What are mere shreds of morality compared with the lineaments of the Divine personality inwrought in the spirit of man? To create the image of God in free intelligences was the end of creation; to create them anew in the Divine image is the end of redemption. Herein lies the true sphere of Christianity. Only when we come to a spiritual perception of Christ's work in the inner life, do we approach to an adequate conception of His design, or of the secret cause of the progress of Christianity. But into this pure region of investigation only the believer can rise. *Here* Christianity silently performs its Divine peculiar work. And it so works in the view of all men as to afford them unmistakable evidence of its Divine origin.

V. CHRISTIANITY CONQUERS ALL FORMS OF ERROR.

Christianity has grappled with idolatry and superstition, with atheism and pantheism, with infidelity and rationalism, with impiety and irreligion in all their phases, and subdued them all. For error it has given truth ; for ignorance, knowledge ; for insensate submission to idols, the worship of the living God. Reviewing its work and progress, even Gibbon has been constrained to confess that its influence was not confined to the period or to the limits of the Roman Empire. "After a revolution of thirteen or fourteen centuries, that religion is still professed by the nations of Europe, the most distinguished portion of human-kind in arts and learning, as well as in arms. By the industry of Europeans it has been widely diffused to the most distant shores of Asia and Africa, and by means of their colonies has been firmly established from Canada to Chili, in a world unknown to the ancients."

VI. IT IS STILL PROGRESSING.

Since the time these words were written its progress has been more rapid than ever it was before. Nations have been born in a day. In

India, China, America, Australia, the South Seas, and Africa its conquests have been marked and signal. Everywhere indications of its final triumph may be read. See what it has achieved, the obstacles it has overcome, its victories in the minds and lives of men, and say if Christ has not conquered "the powers of darkness," and founded His Divine kingdom on earth. If all this be already accomplished, is it conceivable that He will fail in extending His reign over the entire race of redeemed mankind?

CHAPTER II.

THE POWER OF THE KINGDOM.

I. THE POWER OF CHRIST IS TRANSCENDENT.

WHENCE comes this power which has “turned the world upside down,” which effects all that Christ designed to accomplish? Whence that wondrous personality, that pure and holy life, these sublime conceptions, this sovereign power of the Galilean youth—power which unites man with God, energises all that is human in him, expels all that is selfish—power which, not of this world, came so opportunely to its relief, which knows the world full well, bears with and overcomes its oppositions, lifts it above itself, yields to its hate in all the meekness of Divine compassion, exhausts its enmity in the patient manifestation of self-sacrifice on its behalf, overcomes its hatred by infusing into it the very spirit of Divine love, and requires only to be truly seen to be realised, loved, gloried in?

Wherever it is received, it spiritually quickens and harmonises both the individual and the race ; imparts perfect peace ; raises men into the region of the Divine. What more is needed in the individual, social, national, intellectual, or spiritual life of mankind than Christ has won for them ? He baptizes the world with the Divine Spirit ; illuminates the mind with the light of infallible truth ; quickens the soul with the life of God ; guides the aspirations and desires into the path of immortal glory and blessedness.

II. AND SO IS CHRIST'S KNOWLEDGE OF MEN.

How came the untutored carpenter of Galilee to originate such pure and lofty conceptions of God and human destiny, while all the world's most gifted minds failed in their efforts to conceive aright of God, or to raise men above barbarous superstition and the bondage of selfishness ? How came the peasant of Nazareth to surpass the greatest rulers of the earth in His conceptions of the true principles of successful empire, the true method of acquiring dominion over the minds of men ? How came the Jew of Palestine to surpass all Jewish and heathen priests in His conceptions of the right method of unburdening the conscience, and to excel all

other philanthropists in His means of elevating the race?

III. HIS KINGDOM TRIUMPHS OVER ALL ENEMIES.

How is it that His kingdom has forced its way in the face of intellectual refinement, literature, philosophy, science—for all these have in turn opposed it—in opposition, moreover, to selfishness, pride, prejudice, contempt; in defiance of ungodliness, immorality, unbelief; in triumph over the persecutions of states, the corruptions of ambitious, speculative minds, the treachery of pretended friends, the failings of real friends? The opponent of Christianity is bound to account for these facts, and to show how he can consistently reject Christ in view of them.

IV. CHRISTIANITY IS UNIQUE.

No other system has ever advanced in the face of such opposition, and with so little to commend it to the carnal mind. It had nothing in its external appearance to recommend it, no pomp or pageantry, no flatteries of the proud, no courtly recommendations, no fascination of royal birth. Mean in its origin, contemptible in the eyes of the wise, it stood alone. Its doctrine

of salvation through faith in a crucified malefactor was "to the Jew a stumbling-block, and to the Greek foolishness." Yet it advanced triumphantly. The lions of the amphitheatre, the flames of the stake, the tortures of the rack, instead of retarding its progress, facilitated its victory. All opposition, instead of checking its progress, has but afforded fresh opportunities to Christ of displaying more fully His Divine character and the omnipotent might of His kingdom.

V. ITS FINAL TRIUMPH IS ASSURED.

And it must continue to triumph. It would be just as possible to remove the sun from the heavens, or to tread the stars into dust, as to impede its final conquest over all adversaries. There are mightier forces, profounder wisdom, more illustrious ends involved in its advance, than there are in the maintenance of the celestial mechanism, in the development of the structure of the earth, the unfoldings of animal and rational existence. It is the greatest, most glorious, most blessed reality of time. Nothing else known to man is so expressly adapted to his nature and necessities as the "glorious gospel of the blessed God." Nothing is so adequate to his wants, so suited to his circumstances, so full

of energising power for his life, as the reign of Christ in the heart. He is the life, the light, and the salvation of mankind.

VI. CHRIST'S CHARACTER WAS UNIQUE.

He alone, of all on earth, has truly known Himself. His conceptions of His own nature, mission, and the results of His coming into the world were not human, but Divine. He spoke of himself as coming forth from the depths of the Infinite to enter into the inner recesses of humanity—to animate, fill, and satisfy the whole being of man. He claimed to be the Son of God and the Son of man—the perfection of the Divine in the completion of the human—worthy of the supreme love of the Father, and entitled to the tenderest affections of men. He claimed to be the revealer of God, because he was *in Himself* the revealed Divinity. He claimed to possess *in Himself*, and through His sufferings and death to give forth, all that is necessary for the restoration of the Divine life in man—the glorious fellowship of man with God. “I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.” He knew that the consciences of men, groaning under the burden of guilt, could realise peace only through faith in Him—that the spirit created in the image of God—

created for blessedness in fellowship with the Father—could not be satisfied with less than consciousness of the indwelling of God's own Spirit.

VII. AND MUST HAVE BEEN DIVINE.

Whence came these truly Godlike conceptions, this conquering power of the obscure Nazarene, power inherent in and proceeding only from *Him*: for it is only by the exhibition of Himself that His kingdom spreads; it is only by the display of His own self-sacrificing love that He wins dominion over men? Could purposes so Divine, conceptions so Godlike, power so mighty be the offspring of human fraud? Could they be aught else than an outcome of the inner thoughts of the infinite and eternal God?

VIII. HIS KINGDOM, FOUNDED ON LOVE, IS INVINCIBLE.

Yes! Christ has founded a kingdom in the world on love, and He reigns in love over all the civilisation of the earth. This fact, so indisputable, must be accounted for by His opponents on principles of their own. The rejection of Christianity as a Divine revelation summons the unbelievers to the proof that Christ has *not* founded a kingdom, does *not* reign over

all civilisation, or else that He founded His kingdom on fraud and advanced it by imposture. Its existence is the world's standing miracle. Who can be persuaded that a visionary enthusiast, dreaming of giving himself up to an ignominious death, and sending forth unlettered fishermen to tell the story of His life and death, to found a universal and eternal kingdom, would be received by the wisest and best of men as the embodiment of the highest wisdom and the divinest love ?

IX. INVOCATION TO CHRIST.

O Thou Light of Life, Manifestation of the Divine, Well-beloved of the Father, who from the eternal ages dwelt in the bosom of bliss ! who throughout the past eternity cherished "delight in the sons of men ;" Thou art that absolute perfection of Being who in the beginning didst come forth from the inmost depths of the Uncreated Essence, to call into existence the whole creation ; and when Thy Father's wisdom and beneficence were abused by mortal flesh didst descend from the sinless consciousness of the Divine, Infinite, and Eternal, into the dark and conflicting realm of sin, to breathe into man the spirit of filial and fraternal life by quickening the souls of the guilty with the pure conscious-

ness of holy love. Alas! that the influence of Thy presence on the sinful, instead of bringing them to hail Thee in Thy merciful work, but aroused their hatred, their envy, their hellish design to crush Thee, lest Thou shouldst allure them from their suicidal course! Still radiating forth Thy truth amidst the deepest darkness, showering munificent gifts upon the ungrateful, maintaining right in return for the greatest wrong, praying for Thy murderers while they only derided, scorned Thee, and nailed Thee to the cross of cruel ignominy; Thou willingly gavest up Thyself to the full power of their enmity, that by Thy meek and patient suffering Thou mightest exhaust their malice, show them the extent of their ungodliness; the self-ruinous character of their opposition to Thee; the condescension of the Godhead in reclaiming them from the errors of their ways; melt them into contrition; fire them with love, and fill them with Divine life, that they might be blessed with a participation with Thee in Thy reign and be made partakers in Thy gracious work. In their madness they drove Thee from amongst them; and Thou didst reappear on earth in the purer radiance of Thine all-glorious self! O Thou unearthly, all-gracious One, Absolute Necessity of our well-being,

Benefactor of the World, Pattern of the all
beneficent and Divine, breathe, O Saviour,
breathe Thy Spirit into the heart of the nations !
Sway Thy sceptre over the face of the globe !
Save the race, O Christ, from its infatuation !
Reign Thou in all Thy blessed power ! Having
begun Thy conquest, Thou canst not but pre-
vail. No power on earth, in heaven, or in hell
can arrest the progress of Thy dominion.
Creation groans with longing to celebrate Thy
triumph. The Father Himself exults in Thy
victory, and rejoices in receiving from Thee the
homage of Thy reign !

CHAPTER III.

WHY CHRISTIANITY IS NOT UNIVERSAL.

I. TIME IS A FACTOR IN THE EVOLUTION OF THE DIVINE PURPOSE.

WHY is Christianity not universally acknowledged? Is it from the very nature of things, from the purpose of Christ, the character of the Divine life in the soul of man, and the end of universal being? Doubtless, the element of time necessarily enters into the manifestations of the Infinite to the finite creation. An instantaneous and complete revelation of Himself may be possible only to the consciousness of the infinite God. He is ever conscious of His own being and purpose. The finite creature can learn to know the Divine only by slow and gradual advances. The hindrances to the manifestation of the Divine lie not in God, but in the finite being. God may instantaneously and completely reveal Himself *to* Himself, but not to the finite. Not because *He* is not omnipotent, all wise and

all gracious, but because the finite creature cannot be created in the full consciousness of the Infinite ; nor can the Divine life be fully developed in an instant. If John Stuart Mill had, in his wisdom, perceived this truth, he would not have spoken of the Creator as a “Being not omnipotent.”

II. AN INSTANTANEOUS REVELATION OF THE INFINITE MAY NOT BE POSSIBLE.

Men talk unwisely in saying that God might have created the world in an instant, revealed Himself at once, perfected life in a moment. If He might have done this, would He not have done it? But we know that He has *not* done it, does not so act; and a single moment’s reflection enables us to see that the hindrances to His so acting do not arise from any defect in omnipotence, but from the very nature of the finite being. External form *must* be imparted instantly to matter in its creation; for matter cannot exist without form; but the inner development of life requires time as an essential factor. Fully developed inner life cannot at once be imparted. Life may be imparted with the potentiality of development; it may be produced in embryo, and exist in the stages of infancy and youth; but time is necessary to its

reaching maturity. This arises from the very nature of evolution and the development of life. The sculptor may almost instantly chisel the block of solid marble into the full-grown stature of man ; but the embryo of humanity requires years to reach its manhood. The painter may almost in a moment depict the countenance of age on the canvas, but that countenance required many a year, and many a struggle of mind, before it came to bear the stamp of senility.

III. CREATION IS A GRADUAL PROCESS ; AND SO IS THE NEW CREATION.

If the old creation required myriads of ages for its accomplishment, can the new creation be completed in less ? If the evolutions of the forms of matter require measureless duration, can the development of the endless phases of the Divine life in the soul require less ? If the manifestations of the Divine in the finite nature can attain to its perfection only in an infinite variety of phases and an endless duration of realization, can we expect that the Christianity which is working out this purpose of the Infinite Mind will accomplish it in a few millenniums ?

IV. GOD'S PURPOSE IS TO EDUCATE THE FINITE
MIND INTO A COMPREHENSION OF THE
INFINITE.

The transition of the finite consciousness, from the first dawn of conception to oneness of comprehension with the Infinite, is the end of God in the revelations of Himself. And this is possible to the finite mind and life only through a universal and endless experience—an experience involving the knowledge of good and evil, of the descent of the race into the depths of sinful antagonism to God, and its elevation to the heights of a conscious oneness with God. In the attainment of this oneness in the world to come, the sum of the individual experiences of the race throughout all time will form that Book of Revelation the study of which will occupy eternity. This conception of the methods of God's dealings with man casts a flood of light on many a dark phase of the Divine government, and explains what to many minds appears the slow progress of Christianity in the world. Christ's idea, then, required *time* for its development. The idea of an instantaneous acceptance of His doctrine by the world, of the immediate completion of His reign, formed no part of His conception of the nature of His own work. The assumption that it did so is the mistake of the

world, and the error even of many of His disciples. The nature of His reign, the comprehensiveness of His plan, the mode in which He overcomes evil and develops His life in humanity, exclude the possibility of His ever having entertained the conception of a *sudden* triumph over His foes. His reign in man embraces the sum of all human existence. It is completed only in the entire subjugation of everything in the believer to Him, and by everything in the world being brought under His power and moulded by His principles. And the accomplishment of this purpose requires not only the entire period of the believer's life, but likewise the whole lifetime of the generations of mankind. This truth is clearly stated by Christ in several of His parables and profounder sayings.

V. IMPATIENCE IS A HUMAN FAILING, NOT A DIVINE SENTIMENT.

The feeling of impatience is characteristic of man, but not of God. The boy wishes to become a man. Every man would desire to attain the end of his existence without passing through the painful experiences of life. Israel of old would have preferred that the borders of Canaan had joined the skirts of Egypt, and that

no toilsome journey through the wilderness had intervened. Christians of every century have dreamed that the millennium was immediately to be ushered in. Men are slow to perceive that the discipline of youth is needful for the success of manhood, and that experience in the struggle of life is necessary to the realization of the perfection of the heavenly state. It was requisite that Israel should traverse the desert, in order that all that had been born in Egypt and had come out of the land of Ham should perish in the wilderness ; that only those who had been reared under the immediate training of Jehovah should go in and possess the land ; that all who had sprung up in the Church of the desert should have time to exhibit, develop, and prove their training. And was there no typical instruction, no lesson of importance, to the Church of after ages, designed by Jehovah in this arrangement of His providence ?

VI. THE EDUCATION OF MIND IS INFINITELY NOBLER THAN THE EVOLUTION OF MATTER.

The training and progress of mind is of vastly greater importance than the evolution of matter. The deep realized experience of spirit is of more worth than the development of rational life. The work of the Son was necessary to, and prepara-

tory for, the regeneration of the soul and its training in the perfect image of God. This training is not the work of a moment, but of the life, through the Spirit dwelling and working in the believer according to God's good pleasure.

VII. GOD, BY THE CHURCH, IS EDUCATING MIND FOR ETERNITY.

The nature, importance, and grandeur of this work is but dimly apprehended by the Church. Yet this is the very work by which God "unfolds to principalities and powers His manifold wisdom"—the grand design and comprehensive plan of His eternal counsel. Can we imagine that this is a work to be accomplished in a day? If God is now showing to principalities and powers in heavenly places by the Church His manifold wisdom, His purpose and plan, will He not in the ages of the eternal state direct the attention of the redeemed themselves to the past of their own experience on earth? Can we imagine that there is no record being kept for future use of what is now going on in the Church below, to be hereafter studied by the Church above? Is the consciousness of what is now being realised by the believer in his progress in sanctification to be lost to him in the future? The memory of his present struggles with the

powers of darkness will be vividly before him in the heavenly state. The history of the Church on earth will be perused and profoundly studied by the ransomed in heaven. In their study of the records of the conflicts of the Church with the world they will perceive what is the real nature of sin and of the work of salvation ; what has been the wisdom and grace that have guided and sustained them in their encounters with their spiritual adversaries on earth. There is nothing in the economy of grace to be lost. What is now taking place amid the imperfections of earth, in the experience of God's people, will be brought to light in heaven. The contemplation of this will deepen the gratitude and fire the ardour of the glorified saint, inasmuch as he will then perceive the many ways and great difficulties through which God has conducted him to glory.

VIII. TO TRACE THE COURSE OF THIS DIVINE EDUCATION WILL BE AN EMPLOYMENT FOR THE REDEEMED.

If the geologist delights to trace in the present condition of fossils the movements of matter in the past epochs of the world's formation ; if the antiquary takes pleasure in bringing to light the past history of buried cities, through the

excavations of the monuments of their former greatness ; if the historian pores with anxious care over the records of the past that he may be enabled the more accurately to present a faithful narrative of the struggle for principles, and the motives which actuated the heroes of the past ; if the Biblical critic scans with eager solicitude the all but effaced tracings of inspired records in the dusty manuscripts of past centuries, and brings every instrument to his aid to decipher the true reading ; what will be the deep and glowing interest with which, in the eternal world, the student of God's government in time will trace the rise and progress of the Divine in man, learn the facts of the founding of the Church in the world, and read the history of its conflicts with the powers of darkness, and its victory over the evils of this life ! If the writings of Church historians are of interest to the student here, what will be the eagerness with which the true history of the Church on earth will be studied by the redeemed in heaven !

IX. "WHICH THINGS THE ANGELS DESIRE
TO LOOK INTO."

The forty years' journeying in the desert to prepare Israel for entering into Canaan, the four thousand years of preparation of the world for

the coming of Christ, were parts of the Divine plan ; and the millenniums which may yet be necessary for the perfecting of the Church on earth will furnish matter for study above. In the end, all that has taken place on earth in connection with Christ's Church will be seen to have entered into His design in commencing and carrying forward His work in the world. If the Son's mission be necessary to the Spirit's work, if the Spirit's quickening and indwelling be necessary to the regeneration and sanctifying of the soul, need we wonder that a long duration of time should be necessary to complete that working of God in man which is to be the mirror of Divine glory, to be gazed upon by finite intelligence throughout the everlasting ages ? The bringing of a free spirit—the transformation of the life of an entire race—back from rebellion to loyalty, from a Satanic to a Divine disposition, is an undertaking of such magnitude and majesty as, in the estimation of the Godhead, suffices for the employment of Divine power for ages and generations. To human view it may appear a long period, but in the estimation of Him with whom a thousand years is as one day it is only the necessary time.

X. CHRIST FORESAW A PROGRESSIVE COURSE
FOR HIS KINGDOM.

Christ, from the first, foresaw that the heart of the believer, the spirit of the world, would not receive Him at once ; and because of the reasons just stated He did not desire this. It enters into His design that every phase of evil possible to be displayed, as well as every element of good capable of manifestation, should be brought to light on earth, in order that they may be fully known in heaven. Had the world welcomed Him when He first came to it, neither His own character nor that of the powers of darkness could have been adequately displayed. Were the believer, the Church, and the world at once to receive Him, the character of the long suffering grace of God, the true nature of the work of sanctification, the inner history of the Church, the genuine spirit of the world, could not have been made manifest. That all these, in their peculiar phases, should be brought into clearest light, entered into the purpose of the Eternal counsel ; and to afford them full scope and ample opportunity for the display of their true nature forms an essential part of the work of Christ in saving man. A comprehensive view of the nature of the work of salvation enables us to per-

ceive that the manifestation of the true spirit of the world, the Church, and the believer, in every aspect of opposition to Christ, and of the manner in which they were severally brought to receive Him, was necessary to the complete accomplishment of His work. If the record of His work is now being written that it may be fully known hereafter, all must be brought to light, that all may illustrate Christ's work in humanity. The perception of this necessity explains the present state of the Church in the world, the attitude of infidelity, the apparently inconsistent life of the believer. The reason, then, that Christ's kingdom is not yet universal, that His reign is not complete even in the life of the believer, is not any inherent weakness or defect in His purpose, plan, or power, but lies in the workings of the powers of darkness, the nature of the development of the Divine life, and the performance of it in such a manner as will afford the fuller display of the Divine wisdom in carrying it on to completion. Were the nature of sin not thus exposed and developed, man and angels might look upon it as a comparatively small matter. All created intelligence needs to be instructed in the fearful nature of sin, if they are to have a true perception of it and to be kept back from it. Sin is a moral sore which must be allowed to fester, in

order to understand how deadly it is. All is necessary to the outcome of the depths of the Divine—the full revelation of the character of God.

CHAPTER IV.

RECAPITULATION OF THE ARGUMENT OF THE ENTIRE WORK.

I.

WE have now brought the argument on the self-evidencing power of the gospel to a close : and while fully alive to the imperfect manner in which it is stated, we have no misgivings about its inherent force. Genuine in its character, irrefragable in its evidence, it requires only to be carefully investigated to carry with it the irresistible weight of a moral demonstration.

II.

We have seen that revelation is not only possible but necessary to rational life ; that mind without ideas is merely capacity for thinking, but capacity for thinking is not the true and perfect condition of mind ; that mind of itself cannot create ideas ; it can only lay hold of such as are evoked within it. Mind, therefore, must have had its *first*

thoughts presented to it ; and the impartation of these first thoughts was revelation. The world, at the appearance of Christ, stood in need of a revelation. The highest genius of earth during the first four thousand years of man's existence had exercised all its powers and talent in an earnest and persevering endeavour to ascertain the spiritual nature and relations of man and reach to a knowledge of the being and character of God ; yet, notwithstanding all the endeavours of its most gifted minds, the world sank into the deepest degradation of religious and moral life. At this juncture the Nazarene came forth from His workshop into the midst of the moral gloom and spiritual darkness of a selfish race ; and with no countenance for the rich, the learned, the powerful, associating Himself only with the poor, the outcast, the helpless, He lived a life of spotless purity and generous intercourse with men. He was so truthful as never to deceive or mislead ; so kind as never to injure or utter a reproachful word, so elevated in His life as never to entertain a grudge or cherish an envious wish ; so devoted to the well-being of all men as never to lose one opportunity of benefitting any ; so meek and patient under the greatest wrongs as to entertain not one resentful emotion or malevolent desire ; so self-sacrificing as, when ingratitude, injustice,

and malice pierced His soul to the quick, He poured out His blood in expiation of the sins of men, and prayed with fervour for the forgiveness of His foes while in the very act of taking His life with every circumstance of cruelty and contempt. Not alone did He live a life of perfection, unapproached by the most virtuous and devout of earth, but He spoke truth regarding the character of God, the spiritual nature, relations, and recovery of man ; not as the guesses of speculation, the discoveries of reason, or the teachings of nature, but as direct revelation from God, uttered in clear, profound, and concordant language : truth not only above, but the very reverse of, the surmisings of man, and infinitely beyond the reach of his profoundest discoveries. Christ claimed to be the revealer of God to man, and the lessons which He taught disclosed sublime and heavenly truth: truth worthy of God, and adequate to all the necessities of human well-being.

III.

Christ not only revealed the truth which man had in vain sought to discover, but He supplied men with a test whereby each could for himself become assured of the truth of His teaching, satisfied of the suitableness of His doctrines to

human well-being, and clearly perceive the righteousness of His claims. This is a test not only level to the capacity of all men, but impossible for any man to apply it to himself without realizing the clearest and most satisfactory evidence that Christ is indeed the Saviour of the soul.

IV.

The teaching of Christ was so simple and so adapted to human well-being that it is impossible for any man to receive it by faith without realising a new and the true order of being and life ; so adapted is the truth of Jesus to the genuine life of man that, out of the myriads of human beings who have complied with His stipulations, there never has been one who has failed of resting in the repose and satisfaction of the Divine life. None has ever applied Christ's test to himself without coming to the conviction that Jesus is the Sent of the Father. The greatest and the best of mankind have acknowledged Christ to be a Teacher come from God ; and their only regret concerning Him is, not that they have believed in Him, but that His reign in them was not perfect and complete. When we consider all this we are shut up to the conviction that Christ is indeed the Son of God.

V.

We have seen that the reigning power of the world is selfishness ; that man as a fallen being is necessarily the slave of self ; that the spirit of selfishness is suicidal, ruinous alike to those who act from it and to those who are influenced by the actions of the selfish. The principle of the world is to choose the material present to the neglect and perversion of the Divine and essential—of the opportunities, means, and ends of true existence. The example of the worldly man is immoral, deficient in all that regards God, man himself, and his fellow men. Hence the downward course of the world from the expulsion from Paradise to the coming of Christ, and the difficulty Christianity finds in laying hold of the life of man and raising him to the true standard of a higher life. The spirit, principle, and example of the world is degrading and ruinous, and man by no effort of his own can emancipate himself from its dominion ; for while feeling the evils it brings upon him, he tenaciously clings to it ; instead of perceiving its ruinous character, he considers it as the only worthy object of his devotion.

VI.

But the spirit of Christ is the spirit of self-sacrifice for the glory of God in the good of

man. The principle of Christ is to give *all* attention to the Divine—the essential of being and life—so as to secure the true and permanent, and prepare for the future. The example of Christ is the example of a pure, lofty, self-sacrificing devotedness to the glory of God in the good of all His creatures. He is the sole person that has ever appeared among men who understood the true character of selfishness and set Himself to the task of delivering man from its bondage. He set the example, lived the principle, breathed the spirit, of self-sacrifice into the world, and gave to it the most striking illustration of His devotedness to its well-being. All those who comply with His invitation to live in imitation of Him, realise the truth of His doctrine in their escape from, and their triumph over, the dominion of selfishness.

VII.

Thus the spirit, principle, and example of Christ are in accordance with the nature of man, the necessities and conditions of his well-being. By inbreathing this spirit man is enabled to embrace his present opportunities of ascending to the loftiest and most blessed realisations of glory, and thus to have within himself the consciousness of a pure and peaceful life, the clearest

and most convincing evidence that Christ is the Faithful and True Witness come from the Father.

VIII.

We have seen that Christianity is a fact of history ; that its appearance in the fulness of the times and its evidence in all subsequent ages cannot be denied, and must be dealt with in the same manner as all other facts known to man ; that Christianity comes to all men, demanding of them a thorough change of the inner life ; that it clearly discloses the character of this change, supplies men with the power of effecting it, and in the measure in which it is effected lifts him out of conflict into peace, out of error and prejudice into the light of saving truth, out of selfishness into godliness. These facts show clearly that Christianity is and must be of God. Man in all periods of human existence has felt his need of a great moral change, but has ever been profoundly ignorant of the nature of this change ; and while striving after the possession of power he never had the slightest glimpse of the nature of the power necessary to effect it in him. Nay, the more eagerly he sought after the power of deliverance, he only removed himself the farther from it. Christianity reveals the

nature of the change, and supplies the power of effecting it.

IX.

These facts demonstrate that Christianity is and must be of God. If it requires a radical change in the life of every human being, a change of which he is ignorant, and to which he is strongly disinclined ; if it shows that this change is one of which man could not form the least conception, and at the same time supplies the power of effecting it, and proves to him that this is a power which no finite being *could* wield ; if it effects this change in man in face of the most formidable opposition ; if in the measure in which this change is wrought it raises the subject into the nearest and most endearing fellowship with God—must it not be evident that Christianity is and must be of God ?

X.

We have seen that the rebel spirit is the most difficult of all to subdue ; that to overcome this spirit in a free and responsible being, so as not only to do no injury to free agency, but to perfect the responsible nature and life, was a work of formidable difficulty ; that the power necessary to effect a radical change, not in the outer life of man or the substance or constitution of

the soul, but in the very disposition, thoughts, and purposes of the sinner, is a power the very greatest that Omnipotence itself could wield ; that this is a change that could not be effected by any mere display of authority, force, severity, or indulgence, but only by a stupendous manifestation of the self-sacrifice of God, given in such a manner as would enable the sinner to see in this manifestation of the Divine the display of the enmity of the carnal mind to God, and of the fatherly love and gracious purpose of God towards man ; and not alone so, but in order to faith in the sinner in this gracious manifestation of the Divine, there was needed crucifixion of the Son of God, and also the striving work and indwelling operations of the Holy Ghost, that the Spirit of the living God, in the exercise of His long-suffering grace, had to watch for the favourable moment to lodge the conviction of saving truth in the sinner, and also to dwell in the believer, to superintend his passing from partial to perfect sanctification, and submitted to grief as He bore with the opposition, the jealousies, the strifes of believers. If such be the character of the change necessary to human salvation, the manner of its accomplishment, the power necessary to effect this change, it is evident that such a power could be created only

by a striking manifestation of the self-sacrifice of the Godhead, and only by a self-denying act of the Divine Spirit, and therefore Christianity is and must be of God.

XI.

We have seen that Christ's ideal of His kingdom is original ; that His idea of dominion and of the mode of acquiring differs from all the conceptions that were ever entertained by the great and wise of earth. His conception was that He would establish a universal dominion over the heart, conscience, understanding, and life of man, and that the only instrument He would employ in the establishment of this kingdom would be the truth about Himself ; that He would place this truth in the hands of illiterate men to be proclaimed by them, in the full assurance that its proclamation, under the guidance of His Spirit, would secure the establishment of His universal dominion. He claimed the right of dominion over all finite existence, the ability to subdue the powers of evil and subordinate the principles of all life by His own power. Such an idea of conquest and reign over the human spirit is original and sublime ; yet an acquaintance with the history of Christianity enables us to perceive that it is realised on earth. It is such

an idea that if cherished in the breast of a mere man, if attempted to be wrought out by any other than Christ, would certainly have secured for the projector a place amongst lunatics ; but as accomplished by Christ it has secured for Him the adoring homage of every believing spirit. What would be thought of a human being claiming the right to reign supreme in the life of every man, and avowing his determination to secure the dominion of every loyal spirit ? But Christ not alone cherished such an idea, He secured its accomplishment in the establishment of His reign—a reign which the best and most enlightened minds of earth glory in acknowledging His idea of achieving dominion over the spirits of all men by simply publishing through the ministry of obscure men the fact that He died on the cross to create that power which, when applied by the agency of His Spirit, secures that dominion, is one impossible to man, for it is the very opposite of all the cherished sentiments of the race ; and it is also impossible to the spirits of heaven, for the mode of creating that power which alone can secure Christ's reign, until the spirits of light were assured that it was in accordance with the will of God, would have appalled their hearts. And as we can conceive of no higher order of mind, we are shut up to

the conclusion that it must have originated with God alone.

XII.

We have seen that Christianity, as preached by the Apostles, spread rapidly in the earth in the face of the most formidable opposition that Jew and Gentile could raise against it; that this fact is acknowledged by pagan historians; even Gibbon testifying that wherever the gospel was preached Christianity prevailed. The power of Christianity is inherent in its doctrine. It is in the very nature of things impossible that the pure truth of Christianity can be received in the simple belief of it, without the believer realising the reign of Christ in his life. The reason of Christianity not being universal in the earth is traceable to no defect in it, but to the Church's not presenting the pure truth of the gospel for the belief of men. The Church has allowed human prejudice and sectarian zeal to corrupt the pure doctrine of Christ, and He will not employ for the establishment of His reign another gospel. A partial presentation of His truth cannot convince the heart of man. All this was foreseen and foretold by Christ, and is permitted by Him, because it enters into His purpose and plan to afford scope for evil in all its phases to display itself in its encounters with

His truth, in order that the true nature of evil should be displayed and His truth should have the greater triumph and surer victory. Christ's conception of His kingdom is thus a realised fact on earth. And the very fact that such a conception has been realised in human experience is a final proof that Christianity is, and must be, of God.

XIII.

Now, let the facts stated, and the arguments adduced, be carefully and impartially weighed, and we boldly assert that every inquirer will rise from the investigation with a deep and abiding conviction that the mission and work of Christ are in themselves Divine, and give evidence of His essential Deity. He will perceive that Christ has undertaken and accomplished for the race what none but He could have conceived of, what no other has ever attempted, and what none but the incarnate Son of God could have achieved. He will, finally, freely admit that Christianity carries in itself the clearest and most convincing evidence of its Divine origin—an evidence as unanswerable as any demonstration in geometry.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

TACITUS.

TACITUS, writing of the fire which half destroyed Rome in A.D. 64, tells us that there was a general suspicion that the Emperor was the cause of the fire ; and adds, “neither these exertions, nor his largesses to the people, nor his offerings to the gods, did away with the infamous imputation under which Nero lay of having ordered the city to be set on fire. To put an end to this report, he laid the guilt and inflicted the most cruel punishments upon a set of people who were holden in abhorrence for their crimes, and called by the vulgar *Christians*. The founder of that name was *Christ, who suffered death in the reign of Tiberius under his Procurator, Pontius Pilate*. This pernicious superstition thus checked for a while, broke out again and spread, not only over Judea, where the evil originated, but through Rome also, whither everything bad upon earth finds its way and is practised. Some who confessed their sect were first seized, and afterwards by their information a vast multitude were apprehended, who were convicted, not so much of the crimes of burning Rome, as of hatred to mankind. Their sufferings at their execution were aggravated by insult and mockery; for some were disguised in the skins of wild beasts and worried to death by dogs, some were crucified, and others were wrapped in pitched shirts and set on fire when the day closed, that they might serve as

light to illumine the night. Nero lent his own gardens for these executions, and exhibited at the same time a mock Circensian entertainment, being the spectator of the whole in the dress of a charioteer, sometimes mingling with the crowd on foot, and sometimes viewing the spectacle from his car. This conduct made the sufferers pitied, and though they were criminals and deserving the severest punishment, yet they were considered as sacrificed, not so much out of regard to the public good, as to gratify the cruelty of one man."

GIBBON.

Gibbon adds his testimony : "The most sceptical criticism is obliged to respect the truth of this extraordinary fact, and the integrity of this celebrated passage of Tacitus. The former is confirmed by the diligent and accurate Suetonius, who mentions the punishment which Nero inflicted on the Christians, a sect of men who had embraced a new and criminal superstition. The latter may be proved by the consent of the most ancient manuscripts ; by the inimitable character of the style of Tacitus, by his reputation, which guarded his text from the interpolations of pious fraud ; and by the purport of his narration, which accused the first Christians of the most atrocious crimes, without insinuating that they possessed any miraculous or even magical powers above the rest of mankind."

SUETONIUS.

The statement of Suetonius is that "The Christians, a set of men of a new and mischievous superstition, were punished." Speaking of the wide-spread expectation that some potentate of universal dominion should arise in Judea, he says : "There has been for a long time all over the East a notion firmly believed that it was in the fates that at that time some personage out of Judea should obtain the mastery of the world."

EPICTETUS.

Epictetus refers to the inflexible constancy of the Christians under persecution : "So it is possible that a man may arrive at this temper and become indifferent to these things from madness or from habit, as the Galileans."

MARCUS AURELIUS.

Marcus Aurelius viewed the firmness of the Christians in the same light: "Let this preparation of mind" (to die) "arise from its own judgment, and not from obstinacy, like the Christians."

PLINY.

Pliny's testimony is almost too familiar to be quoted : "Pliny, to the Emperor Trajan, wishes health and happiness. It is my constant custom, Sire, to refer myself to you in all matters concerning which I have any doubt; for who can better direct me when I hesitate, or instruct me where I am ignorant? I have never been present at any trials of Christians, so that I know not well what is the subject matter of punishment, or of inquiry, or what strictness ought to be used in either. Nor have I been a little perplexed to determine whether any difference ought to be made on account of age, or whether the young and tender, and the full grown and robust, ought to be treated all alike; whether repentance should entitle to pardon; whether the name itself, although no crime be detected, or crimes only, belonging to the name name, ought to be punished. Concerning all this I am in doubt. In the meantime I have taken this course with all who have been brought to me and have been accused as Christians. I have put the question to them whether they were Christians. Upon their confessing to me that they were, I repeated the question a second and a third time, threatening also to punish them with death. Such as still

persisted I ordered away to be punished, for I had no doubt, whatever might be the nature of their opinions, that *continued and inflexible obstinacy* ought to be punished. There were others of the same infatuation who, because they are Roman citizens, I have noted down to be sent to the City. In a short time the crime spread itself, *even whilst under persecution*. As is usual in such cases, divers sorts of people came in my way. The information was presented to me without the author, containing the names of many persons who, upon examination, denied that they were Christians, or had ever been so, who repeated after me the invocation of the gods, and with wine and frankincense made supplication to your image, which for that purpose I had caused to be brought in and set before them, together with the statutes of the Deities. Moreover, they reviled the name of Christ; none of which things they who are real Christians *can be compelled to do*. These, therefore, I thought proper to discharge. Others were named by the informer, who at first confessed that they were Christians, but afterwards denied it, and some acknowledged that they had been, declaring that they relinquished the profession, some about three years ago, some a longer time, and several more than twenty years. All these paid the accustomed divine honours both to your statue and to the image of the gods, and they also reviled Christ. They moreover declared that the whole of what was laid to their charge, whether it were a crime or a mere error, consisted in this, that they made a practice on a certain day to meet together before daylight to sing hymns with responses to Christ as God, and to bind themselves by a sacrament not to do any wrong act, and that they would not commit any thefts, or robberies, or acts of injustice, that they would never break their word, that they would never violate a trust, that when these observances were finished they separated and afterwards they came together to a common and innocent

repast, but that they had given over this last practice after my edict, in which, according to your orders, I forbade social meetings. Upon this declaration I thought it requisite to get at the entire truth, by putting to the torture two women who were called deaconesses, but I discovered nothing beyond *an austere and excessive superstition*. Upon the whole, therefore, I determined to adjourn the trials in order to consult you ; for the case appears to demand my so doing, particularly on account of the *great number* of persons who are in danger of suffering. For many of all ages and of every rank are accused and will be accused. Nor has the contagion of this superstition seized cities only, but villages and the country. It, however, seems to me that this evil may easily be restrained. For it is assuredly sufficiently obvious that it has been upon the decline. The temples which were, a little time ago, almost deserted, begin to be resorted to as usual, and victims which hitherto hardly found a purchaser, are now in full request, whence you may naturally suppose that a multitude of men might be reclaimed, if allowance were granted."

TERTULLIAN.

Tertullian, addressing the Roman Emperor, says : "We are but of yesterday and have filled all places belonging to you—your cities, islands, castles, towns, councils, your very camps, wards, companies, the palace, senate, forum. We have left you only your temples. . . . We could easily make a terrible war upon you, by simply being so passively revengeful as only to leave you. Should the numerous hosts of Christians retire from the empire into some remote region, the loss of so many men of all ranks and degrees would leave a hideous gap, and inflict a shameful scar upon the government ; you would stand aghast at your desolation and be struck dumb with the

general silence and horror of nature, as if the whole world had departed."

GIBBON.

Even Gibbon, referring to the wide and rapid spread of Christianity, expresses himself thus : "A candid but rational inquiry into the progress and establishment of Christianity may be considered as a very essential part of the history of the Roman Empire. While that great body was invaded by open violence and undermined by slow decay, a pure and humble religion gently insinuated itself into the minds of men, grew up in silence and obscurity, derived new vigour from opposition, and finally erected the triumphant banner of the Cross on the ruins of the Capitol."

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